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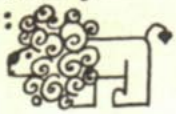

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OCTOBER 1969
VOL. XXXIII NO. 4

Edited by MELVIN J. LASKY *and* NIGEL DENNIS

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Published monthly at 25 Haymarket London SW1. Per copy: UK 5s.: USA & Canada $1: India Rs. 3.25. Back numbers: 6s. ($1). Annual sub.: UK 57s. 6d.: USA & Canada $10 (by air $11.50): India Rs. 36: Elsewhere 70s. Trade/Subscriptions: Encounter Ltd., 25 Haymarket London S.W.1 (01–839 7667).
US & Canadian subscriptions: British Publications Inc. 30 East 60th Street New York, N.Y. 10022. US newsstand distribution by Gordon & Gotch (USA) Inc. 485 Fifth Avenue New York 10017 (MU 7–2645). Authorised as second-class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for the payment of postage in cash. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

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Paul Roazen

A Curious Triangle

Freud, Lou Andreas-Salomé, & Victor Tausk

When Lou Andreas-Salomé came into Freud's circle in 1912, she was bound to represent an acquisition for Freud personally, as well as for psycho-analysis. As Nietzsche's friend and expositor, she came to Freud with the aura of past European culture. Lou was still on close terms with Rilke, whose lover she had been and whose development as a poet she had assisted; together they had taken a trip to Russia, where they made Tolstoy's acquaintance. (Lou introduced Rilke to Freud in 1913, and Freud once wrote a short paper about the meeting.[1])

Freud was fifty-six and Lou fifty-one when she came to Vienna in 1912; she regarded it as "the turning-point" in her life.[2] Perhaps not entirely by chance, Freud also later wrote that 1912 had been "the very climax of my psycho-analytic work."[3] Before entering the Viennese psycho-analytic scene, she prepared herself by reading everything Freud had written. She came with the intention of eliciting Freud's interest in her, and succeeded completely in her aim.

Lou fits the genre of women who have a knack for collecting great men. Madame de Staël in the 18th century and Alma Mahler in the 20th illustrate the type. In Lou's case beauty was not her main attraction; whatever her earlier good looks, she now had to rely on her psychological resources to arouse the attention of any potential conquests. Vibrantly responsive to ideas, Lou possessed an extraordinary talent for identifying with men, and especially with creative intellectuals often subject to inner uncertainties. So of course she would have read all of Freud before approaching him. Lou was useful to her series of great men, but as men fell in love with her, they eventually discovered that she had not truly given of herself: she had mirrored them, had helped in their creative needs, but had withheld herself as a person. Her great men all needed her, but each of her lovers ultimately realised how she had eluded them.

Many years later Freud wrote that he had admired Lou immensely and been very attached to her "without a trace of sexual attraction."[4] Puritanical by temperament, and head of a family of six children, for Freud a physical relationship with Lou was out of the question if only because he could never have tolerated the degree of disorder such an affair would entail. Freud was always moved by the great charm of what he called narcissistic women. Through Lou, Freud was in touch with the spirit of Nietzsche and much of the best of German cultural life. Freud later began to honour his favoured pupils by presenting them with an antique stone to be made into a ring; although he never did this for Lou, he took her into his confidence to an extraordinary degree. In his letters of later years he discussed with her the emotional problems of his daughter Anna. For a time in the 1920s Lou became Anna's psycho-analytic therapist. Freud asked Lou to help loosen Anna's ties to him; but Lou refused.[5] They discussed Anna together almost as if his wife did not matter at all, as if Anna were their child instead. Lou responded with all her devotion, later dedicating one of her books to Anna Freud.

Freud certainly had no special fondness for women with a checkered sexual past. But in 1912 he courted Lou. Her *Journal* records him sending her flowers, and walking her home at 2.30 in the morning. These attentions are all the more noteworthy from a man who husbanded his time jealously. Lou succeeded in making Freud fall in love with her, although in a sublimated way. When she missed a lecture

Paul Roazen *is the author of the recently published study of "Freud: Political and Social Thought" (Knopf, N.Y., and Hogarth Press, London). He teaches at Harvard University, and is now completing a comprehensive work on Freud and his circle of friends and colleagues.*

[1] "On Transcience," in Freud, *Standard Edition*, ed. Strachey (1953), vol. 14, pp. 305–7.
[2] Andreas-Salomé, *The Freud Journal* (1964), p. 131.
[3] "An Autobiographical Study," *Standard Edition*, vol. 20, p. 72.
[4] Ernest Jones, *Life and Work of Freud*, vol. III (1957), p. 213.
[5] Rudolf Binion, *Frau Lou* (1968), pp. 372–3.

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of his, he felt uneasy. Freud had immediately grown used to speaking for Lou: as he wrote to her, "I have acquired the bad habit of directing my lecture to a particular person in the audience, and yesterday I stared as if spellbound at the vacant chair reserved for you. . . ."

In these pre-World War I days, before his cancer and all the disappointments with his pupils, Freud was at his most inspiring. In addition to the regular members of his Society, some well-known people came to meetings. At the height of his powers, Freud was constantly reformulating his ideas; he flourished on contacts with richly endowed human beings. Lou noticed that Freud did not care for cats or dogs. When we consider how in his old age he turned to chows for emotional sustenance, her observation suggests how much more open to human communication he was at this earlier time. He would go to cafés after scientific meetings, amplifying the issues of his lectures in discussion, always exploring possibilities.

Lou was in a special position to understand Freud and his whole circle. For she had actively set out to seduce Victor Tausk whom she ranked "the most prominently outstanding" among Freud's students. Tausk was a dashing Slav whose dynamism and good looks won the hearts of a whole series of women, yet his marriage had ended in failure and successive love affairs came to grief. A man of great versatility, a poet and a writer, a lawyer as well as a physician and psycho-analyst, Tausk was ultimately overwhelmed by his contact with Freud. In 1912, however, Tausk was the most brilliant of Freud's pupils in Vienna. He was handsome, with blond hair, blue eyes, and a moustache. At thirty-three he was eighteen years her junior, and to his friends it was strange, if not offensive, to see him involved with a woman so much older.

Lou came to Vienna flaunting her attractiveness to great men as a vehicle by which present lovers might liken themselves to the famous lovers in her past. While she was in search of talented men to identify with, Tausk could hope that being accepted as Lou's lover might help make him to psychology what Nietzsche was to philosophy and Rilke to poetry. One would think that Tausk, so enormously attractive to women, could have easily found a younger and more single-mindedly devoted woman; but Lou's very self-sufficiency, her skill at pulling out of love affairs at the opportune moment, was a special source of her attractiveness to him. Afraid of being depended upon and loved, Tausk need never feel guilty about Lou.

Lou and Tausk shared many interests in common. Tausk got her into a clinic to observe some cases. He brought her a collection of Serbian ballads he had translated, and she accompanied him on his visits to his two sons, who lived with their mother in Vienna. But on Tausk's part his love for Lou ended in physical revulsion and distaste.

For the year 1912–13, however, Freud, Lou, and Tausk established a triangle which had advantages for each. Lou had recurrently had two men in her life simultaneously. She married Friedrich Carl Andreas after he threatened to kill himself; but she slept only with other men. Before Lou married she had used another man against Nietzsche (Nietzsche's sister considered her a devil.) Lou, Rilke, and Andreas travelled to Russia as a threesome. And now she had a physical relation with Tausk, alongside her deep involvement with Freud.

For Freud the arrangement had frustrations as well as satisfactions. He was jealous of Tausk's opportunity to have an affair with Lou. Tausk was much younger, more virile, and altogether a larger man physically; Freud had already acquired his scholar's stoop. When Freud stared spellbound at Lou's vacant chair, she may well have been with Tausk. On the other hand, Lou could give Freud information about Tausk, and she could help keep this potentially troublesome student under control.

Meanwhile, Tausk had taken Lou at least partly out of identification with Freud; Tausk was certainly glad to play the role of the great man who was currently her lover. Just as Freud was jealous of Tausk's relation to Lou, so Tausk envied what Freud could mean to her. Lou could serve as a channel from Tausk to Freud, raising Tausk's importance in Freud's eyes. For both men she was a buffer.

The Viennese psycho-analytic group was beset by competitiveness for Freud's admiration, and petty jealousies and backbiting are bound to arise in any hothouse atmosphere. To be an analyst then meant to be a pariah in psychiatry. Having given up the quest for approval in the external world, Freud's pupils needed his favour in exchange. Freud provided the inspiration, and, more mundanely, the patients. These apostles gave all their devotion to Freud and turned their hostilities on to the outside world. His believers followed whatever Freud was then working on,

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without daring to stray very far from the legitimate borders he defined. The Psycho-analytic Society had an air of secrecy. Political or religious imagery can best convey the atmosphere of those early meetings. As Tausk put it, "Darwinism ... was a scientific religion, just as psycho-analysis is."[6] If Freud reigned as God, it was his students who made his word law.

Freud, to be sure, encouraged the absolute devotion of his students. Hated and maligned, he was entitled to entice followers by exaggerating the degree to which his supporters were an embattled minority. Freud gave regular lectures before heterogeneous audiences at the university on Saturday evenings, to which his students came with spouses or lady-friends; he limited his audiences by requiring them to get his express permission to attend beforehand. But still Freud preferred speaking in his small group of dedicated followers. He was so self-critical about his ideas that he very much needed a "yes" from the outside world. Since this recognition did not yet come from the world at large, or even from Vienna's intelligentsia, approval had to come from his own little Society.

So Freud collected able people who would in effect be yea-sayers: they were the audience for which he wrote. He wanted them to mirror back his ideas, to help him see his concepts in a slightly different light; but he did not want to be jolted out of a line of thinking already embarked upon. Even if original ideas were brought by others as a sign of their positive relation to Freud, these might seem to him like a hostile attack. "What he wanted was to look into a kaleidoscope lined with mirrors that would multiply the images he introduced into it."[7]

As a woman, Lou would arouse none of Freud's feelings of rivalry: for such an old-fashioned man women simply did not exist as competitors. He wanted corroborators rather than collaborators, and Lou fitted perfectly into such a passive role. She could flatter him while believing everything she said; and as a woman she could take a special delight in pleasing this man. A woman can more easily dissociate her sense of self from her professional work; so to give Freud what he wanted in no way compromised her integrity.

Freud's demand that his students identify with him would eventually mobilise rebellion in men. For a man really to be like Freud meant finally for him to be original: yet originality ended his usefulness to Freud. On the other hand, for a woman like Lou to reflect Freud's ideas back to him fitted in perfectly with her feminine ability to identify with creative men. But for one man to flatter another can be corrupting, and the best of Freud's male pupils left because the atmosphere was too narrow and ultimately dispiriting.

SOME HAVE LIKENED Freud and his circle to a reigning monarch with a court, an obvious comparison for those who lived under the absolute monarchy of the Hapsburg Empire. Freud certainly had this much significance for them all. His pupils were his subjects, owing fealty to him alone; they performed tasks, wrote articles, expounded his ideas. And yet often Freud did not respect them because they lacked independence. Another image which has been used by analysts who lived through those days is that of a large and extended family, with Freud as the unquestioned head. In these terms Freud needed his pupils as adopted sons, to escape isolation and to establish his immortality. Both images imply that if the pupil were not respectful toward the leader and his ideas, he would be in danger of being ousted. Very often the followers were more stringent than Freud in interpreting the permissible range of thinking.

Lou captured this whole atmosphere in one tiny vignette in her diary; her involuted sentences repay the closest attention. Early in her stay she reported a meeting at which Freud tried to counter Jung's influence on psycho-analytic thinking. Freud argued that Jung's term "complex" was unnecessary. ("Complexes" then referred to what we now call "emotional conflicts.") According to Lou, Freud

> showed a subtle and ingenious bit of malice in his attempt to make the term "complex" superfluous, pointing out how it had insinuated itself into the terminology out of convenience, without having grown up on psychoanalytic soil, just as Dionysus was artificially exalted from being an exotic god to becoming the son of Zeus. (At this, Tausk, who was sitting or standing next to Freud, and was still in the white doctor's smock he wore coming from the psychiatric clinic, did not quite stifle a chuckle.)[8]

Both Lou and Tausk obviously understood the undercurrents of Freud's comment. He was likening himself to an immortal god capable of conferring divine favours or withdrawing them from an artificially created son.

If Jung were not to be Freud's successor, then

[6] *Minutes of the Vienna Psycho-analytic Society* (ed. Nunberg/Federn), vol. II (1967), p. 467.
[7] Fritz Wittels, *Sigmund Freud* (1924), p. 134.
[8] Andreas-Salomé, *The Freud Journal*, p. 134.

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Tausk might yearn for recognition. Even if Tausk did not expect to be accepted quite yet as Freud's most beloved son, he might well have seen himself as the future recipient of royal favours once the defecting barons were driven out. Supporting Freud in his quarrel with Alfred Adler, Tausk displayed a degree of malice that Lou considered excessive and unfair. And at the height of Freud's public battle with Jung, Tausk thundered against Jung's heresy. "Clever and dangerous," Lou reports Freud saying about Tausk, "he can bark and bite." Tausk had indeed an aggressive mouth; his beautiful teeth were a prominent part of his face, especially when he smiled. And in these verbal battles Tausk was at his best, though in his articles he could also be truculent and polemical. As Freud commented in an obituary praising Tausk, "his passionate temperament found expression in sharp, and sometimes too sharp, criticisms. . . ."[9]

In listening to Tausk lecture on psychoanalysis, Lou had the impression "not only of classical Freudian theory but also of an unusually loving and reverent approach to the essential discoveries of Freud. . . ." She objected only that Tausk was "*too* precisely Freudian; in any case, he is never likely to be reproached with the contrary." Lou felt that for Tausk's own good his identification with Freud should not descend to imitation. The first to give lectures on psychoanalysis for the lay public, Tausk could repeat Freud word for word. Freud himself was a great orator; but the more Tausk felt impelled to ape Freud, the less of a personality in his own right he became.

LOU FELT WITH THE lightest possible touch just exactly the sources of tension between these two men. Tausk had only been in Freud's circle for a few short years before he became a rival in Freud's eyes. Ellen Delp, a woman of doubtful sexual allegiance who was an intimate friend of Lou's, looked on Tausk as "a genius of Freud's own stature bearing up loyally under Freud's jealous provocation."

What put Freud off? Lou reported that in a discussion after one of Tausk's papers, "Freud's rejoinders were more severe than usual and yet no other person presents his papers to him with such evident reverence. I think that Tausk is of all the most unconditionally devoted to Freud. . . ."

In a few areas Tausk was forging ahead of Freud. For example, he wanted to extend psycho-analytic thinking to the psychology of the artist. He delivered an early paper on sublimation, focusing on the role of inhibitions in artistic creativity. This would one day be considered a perfectly legitimate subject among analysts, but in 1912 Freud felt that "with the persistent calumny of our whole movement on the part of official science, we should not dare to move so boldly into new territory leaving the rear so exposed, and confirmation of earlier discoveries needs to be made again and again. . . ." After this meeting Lou noted Freud's conflict with "independent, or temperamental characters."

Freud characteristically wished to transcend all previous limits of knowledge. Yet when it came to Tausk, Freud thought he was seizing problems ahead of their time. In his obituary, Freud noted Tausk's gift for exploring the philosophic implications of psycho-analysis. Once again, though, Freud hesitated. "Perhaps the time was not yet ripe for laying such general foundations as these for the young science of psycho-analysis." Tausk, according to Freud, had an "impetuous urge for investigation."

When Freud was submerged in following a theme of his own, he would push aside anything that interfered with it. As his earliest biographer (Wittels) noted, "he finds it a nuisance when lights other than his own are thrown athwart his path, or when others try to push him forward or to divert him from his chosen course. Whenever necessary he erects outworks to cut off inconvenient crosslights." Tausk's interests were disturbances to Freud. Tausk pursued fields where Freud thought the way would be blocked, and under those circumstances he soon lost interest.

In contrast to Tausk's universalistic aspirations, Freud believed in the single-minded pursuit of research. The only way to make important discoveries, he thought, was to "have one's ideas exclusively focused on one central interest."[10] In part Freud was reacting to the diversity of his own youth. He recorded in his autobiographical study how "In complete contrast to the diffuse character of my studies during my earlier years at the University, I. . . [developed] an inclination to concentrate my work on a single subject. . . ." Freud admitted his contribution to psychology was one-sided: he claimed only to have unearthed the importance of unconscious motivation, other motives being

[9] "Victor Tausk," *Standard Edition*, vol. 17, p. 275.
[10] Hanns Sachs, *Freud, Master and Friend* (1945), p. 69.

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commonplace. Defending his own narrowness, Freud thought that he "must have needed this one-sidedness in order to see what remains hidden from others."[11]

TAUSK'S WORK irritated Freud, and a good part of the problem was Tausk's originality. Lou and Freud talked it out repeatedly, while she was still engaged in her affair with Tausk. In her diary Lou mentioned having supper at Freud's: "Earlier in the living room he turned the conversation to Tausk and we talked a lot about him; the same later in his study and it was nearly half past one when he took me home. . . ." On another evening Lou wrote that "before supper, and then again later, Freud talked readily and at length about the Tausk problem. At the end he spoke kindly and tenderly. . . ." Evidently this spiritual *ménage-à-trois* arrangement was accepted quite naturally by them all.

Tausk's independence disturbed Freud. He recognised brilliance, admired creativity, but in his immediate circle he needed passive receptacles for his concepts. At this stage Freud was still trying to keep his best students. He hoped to reconcile psycho-analysis's need for first-rate adherents with his own manner of working out his ideas. But Tausk's talents upset Freud's inner harmony. Lou reported after one of the Society's meetings that

> Freud acts with complete conviction when he proceeds so sharply against Tausk. But . . . bearing in mind Tausk's original neurotic disposition . . . it is also clear that any independence around Freud, especially when it is marked by aggression and display of temperament, worries him and wounds him quite automatically in his noble egoism as investigator, forcing him to premature discussion. . . .[12]

Freud resented Tausk's intellectual ambitiousness, preferring men like Otto Rank who, according to Lou, was at that time "a son and nothing but a son." Of Rank, Freud said to Lou: "Why is it that there can't be six such charming men in our group instead of only one?" As Lou shrewdly noted, in Freud's wish for half-a-dozen Ranks "the individuality of the man referred to is put in some doubt."

The crux of "the Tausk problem" was not just that he was a son striving to grow up; for Tausk's independence was partly a façade. His inhibitions in being fully creative made the situation with Freud acute. For worst of all, from Freud's point of view, was that at times Tausk stayed glued to Freud's own preoccupations. In an uncanny way Tausk seemed able to anticipate Freud's own formulations; hence Lou's reference to Tausk's forcing Freud to "premature discussion." Freud felt uneasy with Tausk not just because he had a mind of his own, but also because he dared to use this talent on problems which mattered so very dearly to Freud himself. One passage in Lou's *Journal* conveys Freud's distress:

> In the afternoon after Tausk had finished the lecture . . . we drove to the meeting. I went on ahead and walked with Freud, who was waiting for me in the street. He was restless (on account of the closeness of the ideas to his own), questioned me during the lecture, passing a note to me: "Does he know all about it already?"[13]

Here lay the centre of Freud's difficulties with Tausk; and Freud's distress that Tausk might steal some of his ideas before Freud himself had quite finished with them also helps explain why Lou could be useful to Freud in relation to Tausk. Freud could count on her to keep him informed about Tausk's work, just as he could be sure on whose side she would ultimately come down. Freud felt uncomfortable with someone like Tausk around, a man bright enough even to anticipate some of Freud's own concepts. Freud did not like the uncertainty that Tausk might have an idea before Freud himself; and it bothered Freud to have to acknowledge Tausk's contributions.

THE SITUATION, HOWEVER, never got beyond Freud's control. Ultimately Freud could afford to brush Tausk off completely. But for Tausk the whole conflict with Freud touched close to the centre of his being. Lou was sensitive enough to see it all from the perspective of Tausk's inner difficulties:

> Only now do I perceive the whole tragedy of Tausk's relation with Freud: that is, I realise now that he will always tackle the same problems, the same attempts at solution, that Freud is engaged in. That is no accident, but signifies his "making himself a son" as violently as he "hates the father for it." As if by a thought transference he will always be busy with the same thing as Freud, never taking one step aside to make room for himself.

Lou knew enough about Tausk to understand how much he was one of those psycho-analysts who "stand themselves in practical need of the method they profess." However she greatly exaggerated the degree to which Tausk could only follow along in Freud's footsteps; for at this

[11] Sigmund Freud, *Letters* (1961), pp. 313–14.
[12] *The Freud Journal*, pp. 97–8. [13] P. 114.

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time Tausk was already making thoroughly original contributions by pioneering the application of psycho-analytic insights to the understanding of psychoses. (Freud held himself at some distance from psychotic clinical problems, restricting his work to the less severely disturbed, to neurotics.) Lou was right, however, that Tausk was self-absorbed and introspective, excessively ambitious and yet passionately loyal to Freud. The situation was in fact such that Tausk could place all the blame on Freud for their mutual difficulties.

Lou recognised the extent to which Tausk's troubles came from within his own discordant soul. "What he wants is his blind and dumb self-expression, suffering so greatly as he does under the burden of himself." Tausk clung to Freud partly out of his own lack of inner resources. No matter how brilliant and independent he might be, somewhere he did have a "gap in creativity," which became "filled by identification with the other (son-ship) which constantly begets the illusion of having attained the anticipated position." Tausk could be profound in his psychological understanding of others as a displacement of "his own longing to be analysed himself," and so at times to be as self-deceptive as anyone.

Lou loved in Tausk his helplessness before his inner being, his tortured struggle to use his intellect to master his passions. He was demanding, but his capacity to have illusions made him lovable. His self, however, remained the prisoner of the past. In Tausk, she wrote,

> there still remain those irreconcilable contradictions between that which Freud calls the "beast of prey" (which at least helps him in the practical management of life) and his own oversensitivity to the point of self-dissolution. It is all so painful to behold that one would like to look the other way and run away. In the long run no helpful relationship is possible; there can be none when reality is cluttered by the wraiths of unabreacted primal reminiscences. An impure tone resonates through everything, buzzing as it were with murmurings from within.
>
> Yet from the very beginning I realised it was this very struggle in Tausk that most deeply moved me—the struggle of the human creature. Brother-animal. You.[14]

TAUSK WENT ON to do creative work as a psycho-analyst; in our own time both Bruno Bettelheim and Erik Erikson, for example, have built upon Tausk's prior contributions to ego psychology. In his quite original work with psychotic patients, Tausk was the first to formulate the important concept of "ego boundaries"; and he was also the first to introduce the term "identity" into psychoanalytic literature, in his paper on the "influencing machine" in schizophrenia. But the first World War uprooted Tausk from his medical practice, and when he came back from the war seeking Freud's help, the master put him off with finality. In 1919, six years after his affair with Lou and after having been decisively rejected by Freud, a lifetime's troubles came to fruition in Tausk's decision to kill himself.[15]

Lou, already embarked on her career as a practising psycho-analyst, exchanged letters with Freud about Tausk's sudden end. Regrettably, as in the case of all Freud's correspondence, selected passages have been censored from the published version of their final comments on Tausk. Freud wrote the official obituary, the lengthiest he ever penned, in honour of Tausk:

> No one . . . could escape the impression that here was a man of importance.[16]

The immediate circumstances of Tausk's death, including a suicide note to the master, were electrifying to the members of Freud's inner circle. To kill oneself after a quarrel with Freud was to enact one of the most fearful expectations of Freud's followers: to cross Freud meant to run the risk of being destroyed, of having the candle snuffed out and the book slammed shut.

In Tausk's instance he was quite extinguished. The closing sentence of Freud's obituary has become ironic, for he had proclaimed that Tausk was "sure of an honourable memory in the history of psycho-analysis and its earliest struggles." Neither Lou nor Freud ever wrote of Tausk again, and the rest of Freud's circle, trying not to think about what had happened to their fallen friend, certainly did not.

By now Victor Tausk is an almost completely forgotten figure, with scarcely a place in history books. Still, Tausk's tale can help us to understand many of the other controversies in Freud's life, as the same pattern of conflicts recurred several times between Freud and his leading male pupils. The story also powerfully illustrates the timeless theme of how a man's struggle to liberate himself can end in his own undoing.

[14] *The Freud Journal*, pp. 167–8. The concept "beast of prey" comes from Freud's essay "On Narcissism," *Standard Edition*, vol. 14, p. 89.

[15] The when, wherefore, and how of this decision is discussed in my *Brother Animal: the story of Freud and Tausk* (Knopf, N.Y., and forthcoming Penguin Books, London).

[16] "Victor Tausk," *Standard Edition*, p. 275.

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Anna Kavan

World of Heroes

I TRY NOT to look at the stars. I can't bear to see them. They make me remember the time when I used to look at them and think, "I'm alive, I'm in love and I'm loved." I only really lived that part of my life. I don't feel alive now. I don't love the stars. They never loved me. I wish they wouldn't remind me of being loved.

I was slow in starting to live at all. It wasn't my fault. If there had ever been any kindness I would not have suffered from a delayed maturity. If so much apprehension had not been instilled into me, I shouldn't have been terrified to leave my solitary unwanted childhood in case something still worse was waiting ahead. However, there was no kindness. The nearest approach to it was being allowed to sit on the back seats of the big cars my mother drove about in with her different admirers. This was in fact no kindness at all. I was taken along to lend an air of respectability. The two in front never looked round or paid the slightest attention to me, and I took no notice of them. I sat for hours and hours and for hundreds of miles, inventing endless fantasies at the back of large and expensive cars.

The frightful slowness of a child's time. The interminable years of inferiority and struggling to win a kind word that is never spoken. The torment of self-accusation, thinking one must be to blame. The bitterness of longed-for affection bestowed on indifferent strangers. What future could have been worse? What could have been done to me to make me afraid to grow up out of such a childhood?

Later on, when I saw things more in proportion, I was always afraid of falling back into that ghastly black isolation of an uncomprehending, solitary, over-sensitive child, the worst fate I could imagine.

My mother disliked and despised me for being a girl. From her I got the idea that men were a superior breed, the free, the fortunate, the splendid, the strong. My small adolescent adventures and timid experiments confirmed this. All heroes were automatically masculine. Men were kinder than women; they could afford to be. They were also fierce, unpredictable, dangerous animals: one had to be constantly on guard against them.

My feeling for high-powered cars presumably came from her too. Periodically, ever since I can remember, the craving has come over me to drive and drive, from one country to another, in a fast car. Hearing people talk about danger and death on the roads seems ludicrous, laughable. To me, a big car is a very safe refuge, and the only means of escape from all the ferocious cruel forces lurking in life and in human beings. Its metal body surrounds me like magic armour, inside which I'm invulnerable. Everybody I meet in the outside world treats me in the same contemptuous, heartless way, discrediting what I do, refusing to admit my existence. Only the man in the car is different. Even the first time I drive with him, I feel that he appreciates, understands me; I know I can make him love me. The car is a small speeding substitute world, just big enough for us both. A sense of intimacy is

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generated, a bond created between us: at once I start to love him a little. Occasionally it's the car I love first: the car can attract me to the man. When we are driving together, the three of us form one unit. We grow into each other. I forget about loneliness and inferiority, I feel fine.

In the outside world catastrophe always threatens. The news is always bad. Life tears into one like a mad rocket off course. The only hope of escaping is in a racing car.

AT LAST I REACHED the age of freedom and was considered adult; but still my overprolonged adolescence made me look less than my age. *X*, a young American with a 2·6 Alfa Romeo and lots of money, took me for fifteen or sixteen. When I told him I was twenty-one, he burst out laughing, called me a case of retarded development, seemed to be making fun of me in a cruel way. I was frightened, ran away from him, travelled around with some so-called friends with whom I was hopelessly bored. After knowing *X*, they seemed insufferably dull, mediocre, conventional. Obsessed by longing for him and his car, I sent a telegram asking him to meet us. As soon as I'd done it, I grew feverish with excitement and dread, finally felt convinced the message would be ignored. How idiotic to invite such a crushing rejection. I should never survive the disappointment and shame.

I was shaking all over when we got to the place. It was evening. I kept in the shadows, kept my eyes down so as not to see him—not to see that he wasn't there. Then he was coming towards us. He shook hands with the others one by one, leaving me to the last. I thought: "He wants to humiliate me. He's no more interested in me than he is in them." Utterly miserable, I wanted to rush off and lose myself in the dark. Suddenly he said my name, said he was driving me to another town, said goodbye to the rest so abruptly that they seemed to stand there, suspended, amazed, for the instant before I forgot their existence. He had taken hold of my arm, and was walking me rapidly to his car, which looked half a mile long. He installed me in the huge, docile, captivating machine, and we shot away, the stars spinning loops of white fire all over the sky as we raced along the deserted roads.

That was how it began. I always think gratefully of *X*, who introduced me to the world of heroes.

THE RACE TRACK justifies tendencies and behaviour which would be condemned as anti-social in other circumstances. Risks encountered nowhere else but in war are a commonplace of the racing drivers' existence. Knowing they may be killed any day, they live in a war-time atmosphere of recklessness, camaraderie, and heightened perception. The contrast of their light-hearted audacity and their sombre, sinister, menacing background gave them a personal glamour I found irresistible. They were all attractive to me, heroes, the bravest men in the world. Vaguely, I realised that they were also psychopaths, misfits, who played with death because they'd been unable to come to terms with life in the world. Their games could only end badly; few of them survived more than a few years. They were finished, anyhow, at thirty-five, when their reactions began to slow down, disqualifying them for the one thing they did so outstandingly well. They preferred to die before this happened.

Whether they lived or died, tragedy was waiting for them, only just round the corner, and the fact that they had so little time added to their attraction. It also united them in a peculiar, almost metaphysical way, as though something of all of them was in each individual. I thought of them as a sort of brotherhood, dedicated to their fatal profession of speed.

They all knew one another, met frequently, often lived in the same hotels. Their life was strictly nomadic. None of them had, or wanted to have, a place of his own to live in, even temporarily, far less a permanent home. The demands of their work made any kind of settled existence impossible. Only a few got married, and these marriages always came unstuck very quickly. The wives were

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jealous of the group feeling, they could not stand the strain, the eternal separation, the homelessness.

I had never had a home, and, like the drivers, never wanted one. But wherever I stayed with them was my proper place, and I felt at home there. All my complicated emotions were shut inside hotel rooms, like boxes inside larger ones. A door, a window, a looking glass, impersonal walls. The door and the window opened only on things that had become unreal, the mirror only revealed myself. I felt enclosed, shut away from the world as I was in a car, safe in my retreat.

Although, after winning a race, they became for a short time objects of adulation and public acclaim, these men were not popular; the rest of humanity did not understand them. Their clannishness, their flippant remarks and casual manners were considered insulting; their unconventional conduct judged as immoral. The world seemed not to see either the careless elegance that appealed to me, or their strict aristocratic code, based on absolute loyalty to each other, absolute professional integrity, absolute fearlessness.

I LOVED THEM for being somehow above and apart from the general gregarious mass of mankind, born adventurers, with a breezy disrespect for authority. Perhaps they felt I was another misfit, a rebel too. Or perhaps they were intrigued or amused by the odd combination of my excessively youthful appearance and wholly pessimistic intelligence. At all events, they received me as no other social group could ever have done—conventions, families, finances would have prevented it. Straight away, they accepted my presence among them as perfectly natural, adopted me as a sort of mascot. They were regarded as wild, irresponsible dare-devils; but they were the only people I'd ever trusted. I was sure that, unlike all the others I'd known, they would not let me down.

Their code prohibited jealousy or any bad feeling. Unpleasant emotional situations did not arise. Finding that I was safe among them, I perceived that it was unnecessary to be on my guard any longer. Their attitude was at the same time flattering and matter-of-fact. They were considerate, without any elaborate chivalry, which would have embarrassed me, and they displayed a frank, if restrained, physical interest, quite willing, apparently, to love me for as long or short a time as I liked. When my affair with *A* was over, I simply got into *B*'s car, and that was that. It all seemed exceedingly simple and civilised.

THE SITUATION was perfect for me. They gave me what I had always wanted but never had: a background, true friends. They were kind in their unsentimental race-track way, treated me as one of themselves, shared with me their life histories and their cynical jokes, listened to me with attention, but did not press me to talk. I sewed on buttons for them, checked hotel and garage accounts, acted as unskilled mechanic, looked after them if they were injured in crashes or caught influenza.

At last I felt wanted, valued, as I'd longed to be all my life. At last I belonged somewhere, had a place, was some use in the world. For the very first time I understood the meaning of happiness, and it was easy for me to be truly in love with each of them. I could hardly believe I wasn't dreaming. It was incredible: but it was true, it was really happening. I never had time now to think or to get depressed, I was always in a car with one of them. I went on all the long rallies, won *grand prix* races, acted as co-driver or passenger as the occasion required. I loved it all, the speed, the exhaustion, the danger. I loved rushing down icy roads at ninety miles an hour, spinning round three times, and continuing non-stop without even touching the banked-up snow.

This was the one beautiful period of my life, when I drove all over the world, saw all its countries. The affection of these men, who risked their lives so casually, made me feel gay and wonderfully alive, and I adored them for it. By liking me, they had made the impossible happen. I was living a real fairy tale.

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THIS MIRACULOUS STATE of affairs lasted for several years, and might have gone on some time longer. But, beyond my euphoria, beyond the warm light-hearted atmosphere they generated between them, the sinister threat in the background was always waiting. Disaster loomed over them like a circle of icy mountains, implacably drawing nearer: they'd developed a special attitude in self-defence. Because crashes and constant danger made each man die many times, they spoke of death as an ordinary event, for which the carelessness or recklessness of the individual was wholly responsible. Nobody ever said, "Poor old *Z*'s had it," but, "*Z* asked for it, the crazy bastard, never more than one jump ahead of the mortuary." Their jargon had a brutal sound to outsiders. But, by speaking derisively of the victim, they deprived death of terror, made it seem something he could easily have avoided.

Without conscious reflection, I took it for granted that, when the time came, I would die on the track, like my friends. And this very nearly happened. *G*, *H*, or *I*, or whoever was driving when the car crashed and turned four somersaults before it burst into flames, was killed instantly. I had the extreme bad luck to be dragged out of the blazing wreckage only three-quarters dead. Apparently my case was a challenge to the doctors of several hospitals, who, for the next two years, worked with obstinate persistence to save my life, while I persistently tried to discard it. I used to look in their cold, clinical eyes with loathing and helpless rage. They got their way in the end, and discharged me. I was pushed out again into the hateful world, alone, hardly able to walk, and disfigured by burns.

The drivers loyally kept in touch, wrote and sent presents to the hospitals, came to see me whenever they could. It was entirely my own fault that, as the months dragged on, the letters became fewer, the visits less and less frequent, until they finally ceased. I didn't want them to be sorry for me or to feel any obligation. I was sure my scarred face must repel them, so I deliberately drove them away.

I couldn't possibly go back to them: I had no heart, no vitality, for the life I'd so much enjoyed. I was no longer the gay, adventurous girl they had liked. All the same, if one of them had really exerted himself to persuade me, I might.... That nobody made this special effort, or showed a desire for further intimacy, confirmed my conviction that I had become repulsive. Although there was a possible alternative explanation. At the time of the crash, I had been in love with the man who was driving, and hadn't yet reached the stage of singling out his successor. So, as I was the one who always took the initiative, none of them had any cause to feel closer to me than the rest. Perhaps if I had indicated a preference.... But I was paralysed by the guilt of my survival, as certain they all resented my being alive as if I'd really caused their comrade's death.

WHAT CAN I do now? What am I to become? How can I live in this world I'm condemned to but can't endure? They couldn't stand it either, so they made a world of their own. They have each other's company, and they are heroes: whereas I'm quite alone, and have none of the qualities essential to heroism—the spirit, the toughness, the dedication. I'm back where I was as a child, solitary, helpless, unwanted, frightened.

It's so lonely, so terribly lonely. I hate being always alone. I so badly need someone to talk to, someone to love. Nobody looks at me now, and I don't want them to; I don't want to be seen. I can't bear to look at myself in the glass. I keep away from people as much as I can. I know everyone is repelled and embarrassed by all these scars.

There is no kindness left. The world is a cruel place full of men I shall never know, whose indifference terrifies me. If once in a way I catch someone's eye, his glance is as cold as ice, eyes look past eyes like searchlights crossing, with no more humanity or communication. In freezing despair, I walk down the street, trying to attract to myself a suggestion of warmth by showing in my expression ... something ... or something....

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And everybody walks past me, refusing to see or to lift a finger. No one cares, no one will help me. An abstract impenetrable indifference in a stranger's eye is all I ever see.

The world belongs to heartless people and to machines which can't give. Only the others, the heroes, know how to give. Out of their great generosity they gave me the truth, paid me the compliment of not lying to me. Not one of them ever told me life was worth living. They are the only people I've ever loved. I think only of them, and of how they are lost to me. How I shall never again sit beside someone who loves me while the world races past. Never again cross the tropic of Capricorn, or, under the arctic stars, in the blackness of firs and spruce, see the black glitter of ice in starlight, in the cold snow countries.

The world in which I was really alive consisted of hotel bedrooms and one man in a car. But that world was enormous and splendid, containing cities and continents, forests and seas and mountains, plants and animals, the Pole star and the Southern Cross. The heroes who showed me how to live also showed me everything everywhere in the world.

Now my world is only their faces, which have gone for ever, which get further and further away. I don't feel alive any more. I see nothing at all of the outside world. There are no more oceans or mountains for me.

I don't look up now. I always try not to look at the stars. I can't bear to see them, because the stars remind me of loving and of being loved.

dead-end

things &
faces
drift
alley-down, old
fish-fold newspapers
press whisp-
ering to walls, a
cat quick-aside slips: man
knocks at doors, waits
wonders &
walks away.

nobody sees
the strange walls
silently
opening

David Johnson

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Melvin J. Lasky

The Sweet Dream

Kant & the Revolutionary Hope for Utopia

> *"The mind of the philosopher rests with satisfaction on a small number of objects; but the spectacle of stupidity, slavery, extravagance, barbarity, afflicts him still more often; and the friend of humanity can enjoy unmixed pleasure only by surrendering to the sweet hopes of the future (aux douces espérances de l'avenir)...."*
>
> CONDORCET (*1795*)

A DRAMATIC nineteenth-century sense of the historic divergence between England and France led Walter Bagehot to formulate a more general notion of national character. "All nations have a character," he was convinced, "and that character when once taken is, I do not say unchangeable—religion modifies it, catastrophe annihilates it—but the least changeable thing in this ever-varying and changeable world." Certainly he was in no doubt of the national characteristics of the French—"clever ... versatile ... intellectual ... dogmatic ... excitable ... volatile ... superficial ... over-logical ... uncompromising...." All this amounted to "some lurking quality, or want of quality, in the national character of the French nation which renders them but poorly adaptable for the form and freedom and constitution which they have so often, with such zeal and so vainly, attempted to establish." Bagehot's handy epigram was that they were "too clever to be practical, and not dull enough to be free." As for the English, here too was no puzzlement, although he could not refrain from putting the rhetorical question—"Why are we free and they slaves? we praetors and they barbers? Why do stupid people always win?" He gave the answer away. "What we opprobriously call stupidity, though not an enlivening quality in common society, is Nature's favourite resource for preserving steadiness of conduct and consistency of opinion." He found it consoling that "in real sound stupidity the English are unrivalled"; they learned, slowly, only what they must, and they did their duty because they knew of nothing else to do. Yet, beyond the irony, was there no glimmer of wisdom here? Was it only dullness and slowness that saved his countrymen from that "superfluous energy which flows over into philosophy, and has worked into big systems what should have been left as little suggestions"?

> *Old things need not be therefore true,*
> *O brother men, nor yet the new;*
> *Ah, still awhile the old thought retain,*
> *And yet consider it again.*[1]

There is a grotesque and exasperating moment when in the shadow of the stereotypes of national character there is suddenly a hint in the course of actual events that this indeed may be the way things truly are. Once, when a serious clash seemed to impend between London workingmen and the police whom the Tory government had mobilised, John Stuart Mill, true son of his radical father (who had pondered so long over "the art of revolution"), went out into Hyde Park to advise the militant workers: "I told them that a proceeding which would certainly produce a collision with the military could only be justifiable on two conditions; if the position of affairs had become such that a revolution was desirable, and if they thought themselves able to accomplish one. To this argument, after considerable discussion, they at last yielded...."[2] How far we are from desperate Russia, tortured France! What would those others have said? Would they have taken

[1] *Bagehot's Historical Essays* (1965), pp. 401–433; *Physics and Politics* (1867), ch. 6; and, generally, Alastair Buchan, *The Spare Chancellor: the Life of Walter Bagehot* (1959) and Norman St. John-Stevas, *Walter Bagehot* (1959).

[2] J. S. Mill, *Autobiography* (1873; Oxford ed., 1940), pp. 246–7; Michael St. John Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill* (1954), pp. 459–60.

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thought, sketched out conditions, calculated the chances, left open the possibilities of reconsideration?

Small wonder that de Tocqueville, in Paris, lost patience with his countrymen's penchant for "wholesale destruction," never reforming, always transforming; and lost himself in thoughts of what might have happened in France had a monarch of Frederick the Great's temperament been on the throne. Was there a conceivable constitutional remedy, or was it only a narrow choice "between meekly accepting everything or destroying the whole system"?[3]

The issue of a third choice was actually faced by the revolutionaries, but almost always too late and usually in the shadow of the guillotine. A keen European observer, writing to James Madison from Paris, thought that "if they do not aim at too much they may begin a good constitution." He also warned Condorcet that "it was not possible to destroy everything at once." Condorcet's reply is one of the great plaintive cries in the history of revolution—"Who ever talked of destroying everything at once?"[4]

KANT

FROM THIS MOMENT onwards this was, inescapably, the issue that would try men's minds—whether (and if yes, how: and if not, why not) a new breed of men, the committed revolutionary intellectuals, was to proceed to a total and immediate destruction in the name of a complete and permanent renewal. Kant, who had spoken most favourably of the French Revolution (and of the American rebellion too) and who was convinced that without "fantasy" and "enthusiasm" nothing great had ever been achieved in the world, thought incessantly about this problem and finally issued an historic warning about the relationship between moral and political ideals and social realities. He who had known what it was to give oneself up to "the sweet feeling of benevolence" (*dem süssen Gefühl des Wohltuns*) and who had "dreamed the sweet dream," argued that the idea of the highest political good (*e.g.*, perpetual peace) must not be "taken in a revolutionary sense and made the basis of a sudden change through violent overthrow of a previously existing wrong condition." Rather, it must be "sought for and realised by gradual reform in the light of firm principles. . . . ." There were not inconsiderable difficulties here. How could he reconcile firmness with gradualism, principles with the slow process of "an endlessly progressive approximation (*eine ins Unendliche fortschreitende Annäherung*)"?[5]

The revolutionary Kant wrestled with Kant the reformer. When he militantly insisted that "the rights of man must be held sacred," he could not help but go on to say, "One cannot compromise here and seek the middle course of a pragmatic conditional law between the morally right and the expedient. All politics must bend its knee before the right. . . ." *Fiat justitia, pereat mundus*—a "true maxim" whose meaning, *zu deutsch*, he spelled out as "Let justice reign even if all the rascals in the world should perish from it"—was for him "a stout principle of right." But when he thought of abstractions as the motive force of human action, he had his hesitations. "Very few people act from principles, and that is good; the more general the principles are and the more steadfastly a person adheres to them, the more damage is done." More than that, there was on occasion a distinct tone of aversion in his attitude towards "general philanthropy." "Love of

[3] Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Régime and the French Revolution* (1856; tr. Gilbert, 1955), pp. 141, 162–5.

[4] R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution*, Vol. I (1959), p. 470.

[5] Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden* (ed. 1795), pp. 103–4. *Metaphysik der Sitten* (1787), in Kant, *Werke* (ed. Weischedel, 1956), Vol. IV, p. 479. *Perpetual Peace* (ed. Beck, 1957), pp. 53, 59.

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mankind as a whole contains the largest volume but the lowest intensity. If I am interested in the well-being of a particular man in proportion to my love of mankind, my interest will be small." With such a small interest what prospect could there be for the fulfilment of the duty to respect one's neighbour and "never to use him merely as a means for my purposes but to honour his dignity"? Surely only a dim hope.[6]

For clearly, as Kant came to fear, more than rascals perished in an uncompromising, unpragmatic reign of justice. Inasmuch as the revolutionary upheaval produced its effects "tempestuously and violently," it could hardly be "ushered in according to plan without damage to freedom." How indeed could its mistakes be expunged except through yet another "new (and at any time dangerous) revolution"? And if, in fact, a revolution accomplished "the fall of personal despotism or of avaricious or tyrannical oppression," would this constitute a real victory for enlightenment and "a true reform in ways of thinking"? For would not "new prejudices serve as well as old ones to harness the great unthinking masses"? No, the transition to a new progressive order of affairs could only be effected through "gradually advancing reform."

Yet wasn't the price of Kantian progress often the crude and painful excesses of precisely a Kantian devotion to stout principle?

> I grant that I cannot really reconcile myself to the following expressions made use of even by clever men. "A certain people (engaged in a struggle for civil freedom) is not yet ripe for freedom." "The bondmen of a landed proprietor are not yet ready for freedom." And hence, likewise, "Mankind in general is not yet ripe for freedom of belief." For according to such a presupposition, freedom will never arrive, since we cannot *ripen* to this freedom if we are not first of all placed therein. (We must be free in order to be able to make purposive use of our powers in freedom.) The first attempts will indeed be crude and usually will be attended by a more painful and more dangerous state than that in which we are still under the orders and also the care of others. Yet we never ripen with respect to reason except through *our own* efforts (which we can make only when we are free). . . .

Kant's dilemma deepened. There was always a small strain of the Jacobin in him, and one wonders whether he had ever heard the rumour that he had accepted an invitation from Sieyès to come to Paris as his advisor. How would he have survived? (Even the Marquis de Sade, who just before his liberation had been rousing the revolutionary crowd from his cell-window in the Bastille and was given his freedom as a victim of the old régime, found himself re-sentenced to prison by the Revolution for the political crime of *"modérantisme."*)[7]

Of Passion & Prudence

THE ROOT OF THE DILEMMA was in an uneasy association between the revolutionary category of the perfect and the political imperative of reason. Kant had only contempt for what he thought of as mindless empiricism and practicality. "Moderation," or "steering a midcourse," left him cold—"its medicine is like the 'Venetian treacle' wherein so many good things have been mixed that it is good for nothing." Confronted with the ills and miseries of a defective social order, he put an urgent question: "How can they be remedied as soon as possible?" Reconciliation might have been a duty of man, but he was quick to insist that it not be confused with "the weak toleration of wrongs which renounces stern measures."[8]

Yet here, too, a tension recurred in him between passion and prudence, between principle and practice (as if, indeed, there were in him a touch both of Burke and Bakunin).

> It would be absurd to demand that every defect be immediately and impetuously changed (*sofort und mit Ungestüm*). . . . But it can be demanded that at least the maxim of the necessity of such a change should be taken to heart by those in power, so that they may continuously approach the goal of the constitution that is best under laws of right.

Still, were there not situations (he had to admit it) which were "ripe for complete transformation (*zur völligen Umwälzung*)"? And how would he finally feel about "a violent revolution, engendered by a bad constitution, introducing by illegal means a more legal constitu-

[6] *Zum Ewigen Frieden*, pp. 87, 91; *Perpetual Peace*, pp. 44, 46. *Kant* (ed. Rabel, 1963), pp. 62, 317. *Werke*, Vol. IV, pp. 586–8.

[7] Kant, *Werke*, Vol. IV, pp. 786, 862–3n.; *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793; ed. Greene-Hudson, 1960), pp. 112–13, 176n. *Werke*, Vol. VI, p. 55; "What is Enlightenment?" (1784), in Kant, *On History* (ed. Beck, 1963), p. 4. Edmund Wilson, "The Documents on De Sade," in *The Bit between My Teeth* (1966), p. 217; Marquis de Sade, *Selected Letters* (ed. Lély, 1965), pp. 168–88.

[8] *Metaphysik der Sitten* (1797), in *Werke*, Vol. IV, p. 599; *The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue* (tr. Ellington, 1964), p. 126.

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tion"? This troubled Kant; but his ultimate disposition was towards the kind of prudence embodied in such maxims as: If you bend the reed too much you break it, and: He who attempts too much attempts nothing. He opted for "peaceable means," for he feared "the anarchic condition which would result from precipitate reform." Above all (and this in the time of the Jacobin terror),

> ... even when nature herself produces revolutions, political wisdom will not employ them to legitimise still greater oppression. On the contrary, it will use them as a call of nature for fundamental reforms to produce a lawful constitution founded upon principles of freedom, for only such a constitution is durable.

Kant, thus, set himself in a great critical tradition, estranged from both "despotising moralists" and "moralising politicians," alarmed at the imprudent precipitateness of the one and contemptuous of the unprincipled practical tinkering of the other.

In a famous work of 1793 he can still be seen wavering between a cautious course which bordered on unattractive middling principles of moderation and the perfect path of human transformation which could only be the revolutionary apocalypse. How is man ever to become a truly human, moral and virtuous creature? Such an heroic state of earthly affairs, he argues in one place, "cannot be brought about through gradual reformation (*allmähliche Reform*)... but must be effected through a revolution in man's disposition.... He can become a new man only by a kind of rebirth, as it were a new creation...." Yet, in another place, he is forced to reject those simple-minded propositions from Seneca to Rousseau against which "the history of all times cry out," disengaging himself from the sharp disjunctions of "rigorists" and "latitudinarians," and even going so far as to content himself with the unexciting observation that "Experience actually seems to substantiate the middle ground between the two extremes...."

Here Kant openly confesses his inner reluctance to go to such equivocating liberal lengths; *Mitteldinge* had to be rigorously resisted; for, after all, "it is of great consequence to ethics in general to avoid admitting, so long as it is possible, of anything morally intermediate... for with such ambiguity all maxims are in danger of forfeiting their precision and stability." That he might also be called upon to offer a stable contribution which could make precise just this troublesome principle of ambiguity was not his momentary concern. It was enough that he was being driven on to intellectual revisions; and when ideal possibilities and real consequences came into increasingly open conflict, a sense of new dangers replaced some of Kant's old fears of intermediacy.[9]

IT IS NOT FULLY CLEAR how Kant intended to occupy the middle ground, free from the strains of the extremes. Writing of "a glorious ideal" in his study of *Education*,[10] Kant argued that "it matters little if we are not able to realise it at once. Only we must not look upon the idea as chimerical, nor decry it as a beautiful dream, notwithstanding the difficulties that stand in the way of its realisation. An idea is nothing else than the conception of a perfection which has not yet been experienced. For instance, the idea of a perfect republic governed by principles of justice—is such an idea impossible because it has not yet been experienced?..." That such an idea might become "dangerous" and the drastic actions which it promoted "culpable"—these suspicions overtook Kant in the 1790s when he contemplated the course of the French Revolution.

> The revolution of a gifted people which we have seen unfolding in our day may succeed or miscarry; it may be filled with misery and atrocities to the point that a sensible man, were he boldly to hope to execute it successfully the second time, would never resolve to make the experiment at such cost—this revolution, I say, nonetheless finds in the hearts of all spectators (who are not engaged in this game themselves) a wishful participation that borders closely on enthusiasm, the very expression of which is fraught with danger....[11]

There are still traces here of Kant's two minds on the subject. If, as has been said by a recent critic,[12] there is "a fundamental ambiguity" in Kant's thought, it is an ambiguity which illuminates more meanings than most fundamental clarities.

Kant, for all his sedentary Königsberg life,

[9] *Kant* (ed. Rabel), p. 288. *Zum Ewigen Frieden*, pp. 71–74; *Perpetual Peace*, pp. 38–9. *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (1793), in *Werke*, Vol. IV, pp. 665–99; *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (tr. Greene-Hudson), pp. 15–43.

[10] *Über Pädagogik* (1803), in *Werke*, Vol. VI, pp. 700–1; *Education* (tr. Churton, 1960), p. 8.

[11] *The Strife of the Faculties* (1798), in *On History*, pp. 137–54; *Werke*, Vol. VI, pp. 351–68.

[12] Bruce Mazlish, *The Riddle of History* (1966), p. 119. See, generally, Kurt Borries, *Kant als Politiker* (1928).

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lived very much in the intellectual climate of the day, and his political temperament was ceaselessly engaged in the onrushing European events. Agitated by the developments of the Revolution in France ("the topic of every conversation around here"), a Berlin correspondent raised with Kant the relevance of his views to the new questions being argued and offered a humble suggestion to the *Meister*: "I believe that there are many interesting things to be said about the rationality of the basic principles on which the French Republic bases itself, if only it were prudent to write about such things...." One of Kant's friends has recorded that political matters were not to be mentioned in his study, only at table could they be discussed; then from his table, as another friend reported, "a cosmopolitan and free-thinking philosopher watched the experiment which was to realise the idea of a perfect constitution demanded by reason with the same pleasure as a scientist has in looking upon an experiment which is to corroborate an important hypothesis...."[13] With whatever wisdom he extracted from the lessons of experience he sought to disengage social ideals from utopian chimaeras, to salvage a faith in the perfect from the dismal failures of brave human effort, and to maintain his optimism about progress in the face of the snail's pace of destiny. Kant's metaphysical ingenuity saved him, but humour helped too. His intellectual rigour was not above allowing an old joke—he tells it in the conclusion to his *Streit der Facultäten* (1798), and perhaps then it was new—about the doctor, who constantly reported an improving pulse, respiration, and stool, and the ailing patient who replied, "How's my illness? How should it be? I'm dying of improvement, pure and simple! (*Ich sterbe vor lauter Besserung!*)...." Kant, the philosopher of the *Aufklärung*, could not bring himself to blame those who had begun to despair of the health of humanity, its progress towards the better, and other Enlightenment ideals. The utopians loved mankind too much, and the revolutionaries loved men too little.

[13] Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. IX (1922), pp. 436–7; *Philosophical Correspondence* (ed. Zweig, 1967), p. 207. Reinhold Aris, *History of Political Thought in Germany: 1789–1815* (1936), p. 73n.

[14] *The Strife of the Faculties* (1798), *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* (1784), and *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* (1786), in Kant, *On History*, pp. 16–17, 59–60, 153; *Werke*, Vol. VI, pp. 39–92, 367.

KANT TRIED TO RESOLVE his difficulties by revising his utopian longing and reducing his revolutionary commitment. He made a distinction between millennium and utopia. He defended the reasonable dreams of More, Plato, and Harrington, but separated himself from the pious enthusiasm for "a renovated world after this one will have perished in flames." He vindicated the devotion to "distant aims" and, indeed, "the conscious expectation of the future" as the decisive mark of humanity; but he disdained the confounding of man's true hope with an uncultured and instinct-ridden wish for some form of paradise. Thomas More would have understood. Kant made sure to point out that in the achievement of a universal civic order "with the greatest freedom" what would emerge would be a society "in which there is mutual opposition among the members...." More than that, any "complete solution" is impossible, for "from such crooked wood as man is made of, nothing perfectly straight can be built. (*Aus so krummen Holze, als woraus der Mensch gemacht ist, kann nichts ganz Gerades gezimmert werden.*)..."[14]

These were sensitive and subtle revisions. But, like Spinoza before him who had concluded that doctrines could only be "chimaera" and "utopia" if philosophers could not conceive "a theory of politics which could be turned to use," Kant came no further towards a usable strategy of political action. Progress must come, but it would be slow and devious; glorious ideals must be dreamed, but they might prompt pernicious passions. He could not return to a confidence in an enlightened King Utopus for he sensed that any philosopher-king would founder on the corruption of reason which power inevitably brings. What remained of his notions of utopia and revolution was a cautious hope that social reform would somehow go forward "from above," *i.e.*, "not from bottom to top, but from top to bottom." This was not, of course, reason enough to abandon hope. On the contrary, the evolutionary perspective confirmed his optimism about the future: "evolution instead of revolution." But this was less political philosophy than the metaphysics of history.

From More to Marx

IN THIS CONTEXT of essential temperament, the sharp contrasts in the ultimate messages of those three European masters of political

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metaphysics, More, Kant, and Marx, emerge most forcefully. More preferred utopia to revolution (or what he called "hurly burly"); Marx preferred revolution to utopia. And Kant, increasingly suspicious of the ruinous violence of the total overturn as well as the perfect absolutism of the millennial fantasy, tried to overcome his peculiar penchant for both.

This may or may not be the tragic contradiction of that utopian state of mind which, as writers like Friedrich Hayek and J. L. Talmon have insisted, "always" starts with day-dreams and ends with tyranny. I am not eager to press polemically either side of this argument, especially since the Utopian founding father himself would appear to have been in real uncertainty. The troubled passage I am referring to occurs in Sir Thomas More's *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*. This work was written in a bitter and intolerant mood against "Luthers pestylent heresyes," which led him to a justification of the banning of the English Bible. These were days, he notes (and here I modernise some spelling), "in which Tyndale hath (God amend him!) with the infection of his contagious heresies, so sore poisoned malicious and newfangled folks"; hence the decision "for the while to prohibit the scripture of God to be suffered in English tongue among the people's hands, lest evil folke by false drawing of every good thing they read in to the colour and maintenance of their own fond fantasies, and turning all honey into poison, might both do deadly hurt unto themself, and spread also that infection farther abroad. . . ." At this point More is overtaken by a personal sense of troubled self-consciousness: what of his own works? Here he makes his historic retreat, an intellectual withdrawal which has left a disfiguring question-mark on the whole story of simple utopian innocence.[15]

> I say therefore, in these days in which men by their own default misconstrue and take harm of the very scripture of God, until men better amend, if any man would now translate [Erasmus'] *Moria* into English, or some works either that I have myself written ere this, albeit there be no harm therein, folke yet being (as they be) given to take harm of that which is good, I would not only my darling's books [*i.e.*, Erasmus'] but mine own also, help to burn them both with mine own hands, rather than folke should (though through their own fault) take any harm of them, seeing that I see them likely in these days so to do.

If More himself is quite prepared to burn his own book so deadly is the hurt of Utopian fantasies, one would be hard put to deny the critic's equation of literary virtue and political vice. More might well have agreed with de Tocqueville that "what is a merit in the writer may well be a vice in the statesman and the very qualities which go to make great literature can lead to catastrophic revolutions. . . ." Nor would he conceivably have disputed those 19th-century words which Robert Southey put into his mouth in an imaginary colloquy in his *More* book: ". . . If in the latter part of my mortal existence I had misgivings concerning any of my writings, they were of the single one, which is still a living work, and which will continue so to be. I feared that speculative opinions which had been intended for the possible but remote benefit of mankind, might, by unhappy circumstances be rendered instrumental to great and immediate evil. . . ."[16] However, this great (and surprising) self-critical tradition of the utopian's own fear of utopianism is not my present concern.

What I am trying to suggest is that the utopian detail makes possible a critical focus between the real and the ideal. In dreams begin responsibilities. If the primary aspiration of all history is held to be a genuine community of human beings, then the utopian prophecy becomes the usable measure of all things. It is precisely this prophetic tradition that Marx, as an anti-utopian revolutionary, abjured. Revolutionary man tends either to be a connoisseur of the apocalypse or a visionary of the terrestrial paradise. Prophetic utopians like St. Simon, Fourier, Robert Owen, were cursorily dismissed: "Those new social systems were from the outset doomed to be utopias; the more their details were elaborated, the more they necessarily receded into pure fantasy."

It is only fair to reiterate that this was not done without some mixed feelings, for Marx and Engels had defended the "dreamers" against the "philistines": "We, on the contrary, delight in the inspired ideas and germs of ideas which everywhere emerge through their covering of fantasy. . . ." But then these solutions

[15] Sir Thomas More, *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* (1532), Bk. 2, p. 129; *The Workes of Sir Thomas More, Knyght, sometyme Lord Chauncellour of England, wrytten by him in the Englysh Tonge* (1557), pp. 422–3. There are minor differences in this passage as printed in these two editions in the British Museum.

[16] Robert Southey, *Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society* (1831), Vol. II, pp. 303, 458–9.

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were only "produced out of their heads (*aus dem Kopfe erzeugt*)." The prophetic utopians may have "anticipated with genius countless truths," but it was only when Marxism came along that "the validity of these truths could be proved scientifically." Marx was infatuated and Engels intoxicated with the scientifical aspect of their sociological enquiries; and they recovered soon enough from the early ambivalence of their attitude towards the prophets. Utopia could not realise itself without the abolition of romantic longing and political escapism; and these cannot be abolished without the recognition of historical revolutionary necessity. Utopia will not come because it is desirable; it will come because it is necessary and inevitable. The others may have seen a vision, but they had been privileged to hear the crack of the thunder. And suddenly "the task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to investigate the historical economic process from which these classes and their antagonisms had of necessity sprung and to discover in the economic position thus created the means for solving the conflict...." The others, possessing only their vision, were mere dreamers; they, with the logic of history at their command, had won the prize of certitude. Today, with a century of hindsight at our command, it would only appear that one man's logic is another man's fantasy.

"I am working like mad all through the nights," Marx wrote to Engels in December 1857, "so that I may at least have the outlines clear before the *déluge* comes."[17] They did not pause, impatiently waiting for the apocalypse, to ask themselves: Was there truly a contradiction between the ethical projection of the ideal and the critical analysis of the real? Were these two moral and intellectual tasks mutually exclusive? It is clear, as can be seen from the political career of Thomas More, that utopian vision without a social base is politically helpless; but a political movement without utopian vision is morally blind.

THIS WAS THE SENSE of Kant's last words on behalf of what he called the "sweet dream." More's *Utopia*, like Plato's *Republic* and Harrington's *Oceana* "have never so much as been tried (Cromwell's abortive monster of a despotic republic excepted)...." True, in the bitterness Kant had come to feel about the costly revolutionary experiment of his own day, he became persuaded that it was "rash" to propose dreams and, indeed, "culpable to abolish what presently exists." He who had confidently announced that "the ultimate destiny of the human race was the greatest moral perfection" now felt that "we must not hope too much from men in their progress towards the better...." He was reluctant to face the mockery of politicians who took "the hopes of man as the dreamings of distraught minds." Yet, as he wrote, "it is sweet, however, to imagine constitutions corresponding to the requirements of reason." Utopian ideals were not "empty chimaerae"; and he held the perpetual approaches to their consummation not only thinkable but obligatory. What was to remain throughout as his constant personal guide was, in a happy phrase, "the compass of reason." A whole chastened conception of the hazardous relationship between heroic human ideals and historic social difficulties was summed up in this passage from one of his letters:

> To dash with hasty, enterprising steps toward a far away goal has always been injurious to a thorough insight. He who shows us the cliffs has not necessarily set them up, and even if someone maintains that it is impossible to pass through them *with full sails* (of dogmatism), he has not on that account denied *every* possibility of getting through. I think that you will not find the compass of reason to be unnecessary or misleading in this venture....[18]

When, then, is a Utopian an anti-Utopian? When his extravagant concern for the ideal future drives him back to a renewed involvement in the real present. In the case of More, his second thoughts forced him to a self-destructive critique of irresponsible social fantasy; in the case of Marx, to an uncontrollable rage against all dreamers, and their "rotten spirit" which "plays with fancy pictures of the future structure of society... silly, stale, and basically reactionary." In the case of Kant the tension of a utopian's anti-utopianism issued in a mild, reasonable revision of "sweet dreams."

That the *Zeitgeist* was not pleased will surprise no student of ideology. Young Schiller was outraged and now found Kant's views

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[17] Marx-Engels, *Selected Works* (1951 ed.), Vol. II, pp. 111–112. *Briefwechsel* (1949 ed.), Vol. II, p. 314.

[18] *Werke* (ed. Weischedel, 1964), Vol. VI, pp. 357–67; *The Strife of the Faculties* (1798), in Immanuel Kant, *On History* (ed. Beck, 1963), pp. 143–152; *Lectures on Ethics* (tr. Infield, 1963), pp. 252–3. *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. XI, pp. 75–7; *Philosophical Correspondence*, p. 158.

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"empörend"; Goethe, similarly upset at the promulgation of Kant's concept of a "radical evil" (*das radikale Böse*) in human affairs, could hardly contain his horror (in a letter to Herder) at this "wanton and shameful spot" on the revered philosopher's record. It is understandable that such unorthodox departures on the part of the philosopher of "the German theory of the French Revolution" (as Marx, following Heine, was to call him) should have proved so alarming for so many of his faithful readers. In a sense, Kant's doubts and deviations from the contemporary revolutionary ideology cast him in the role of the first German revisionist.[19]

THERE IS A PASSAGE in the *Streit der Facultäten* (1798) which, touching upon utopia and the future, astronomy and revolution, progress, reform and the mixture of good and evil, moves suggestively through many of our main themes.

Kant begins by puzzling over the question: "What have we to expect of the future? Continual progress or continual regress?" He was tempted to see only the farcical aspect of "all the doings on our globe." The global reference led him directly to an astronomical standpoint: for the planets themselves, as seen from the earth, seemed to go "now forward, now backward, and now to stand still." However, according to the Copernican hypothesis (and even the tangle of Tycho Brahe's cycles and epicycles), there would appear to be some "regular course." The astronomical references led Kant onwards to the problem of Revolution which he had once previously associated with the systematic structure of the cosmos, albeit with very little hope of fixing its short path in the context of human affairs. Yet how sturdy was the astronomical analogue, and how long could it survive a reasonable critique? What if the revolution as it actually happens in society does not conform to either Copernicus' principle of circularity or Condorcet's principle of linear progress? Was there ever, in historical events, a "full compassing" or a complete, original turn? Was not what men were pleased to call "Revolution" only an ingenious metaphor which made up in beguiling echoes of celestial certitude and heavenly promise for what it lacked in sober meaningful content? And even if it came to command human enthusiasm and sympathy, political zeal and even moral greatness, Kant was convinced—both by "reading the signs of the day" and by facing "the mixture of good and evil in man's predisposition"—that mankind's progress in the course of history would proceed "gradually, not by revolution but by evolution. . . ."

All this might well have been what Kant himself referred to as "simply the mode of thinking of the spectators which reveals itself publicly in this game of great revolutions (*bloss die Denkungsart der Zuschauer, welche sich bei diesem Spiele grosser Umwandlungen öffentlich verrät*). . . ."

It is a game, evidently, with only so many fixed pieces, just so many limited moves. Contemplating the record of post-revolutionary reconsiderations from, say, Kant to Koestler, one cannot help reinforcing Professor A. O. Lovejoy's suspicion (in that masterful study in intellectual history, *The Great Chain of Being*) that each age seems to evolve new species of reasonings and conclusions, even though upon the same old problems: "But the truth is that the number of essentially distinct philosophical ideas or dialectical motives is—as the number of really distinct jokes is said to be—decidedly limited. . . ."

Kant himself once noted the two most maniacal elements in the *Schwärmerei* that had been gaining ground in a Europe badly befuddled by "loquacious ignorance" and "airy possibilities": namely, faddish French omniscience and systematic German fanaticism. He felt that perhaps for the moment "disdainful silence" would be "more appropriate toward such madness." Movements of this kind, he reassured one of his worried students (in a letter which was surely too ironical for real comfort), "have but a short duration before they make way for new follies."[20]

Of Truth & Sincerity

A NUMBER OF important considerations remained for a philosophy which sought belatedly to qualify in this singular fashion the

[19] Marx to Sorge, 19 Oct. 1877, in *Selected Correspondence* (tr. Torr, 1942), p. 350. Marx-Engels, *Werke* (ed. 1964), Vol. I, p. 80. Karl Jaspers, "Das Radikal Böse bei Kant," in *Rechenschaft und Ausblick* (1951), p. 90.

[20] *Werke* (ed. Weischedel), Vol. VI, pp. 355–8; *The Quarrel between the Faculties* in *Kant* (tr. Rabel), pp. 335–6, and in Kant *On History* (ed. Beck), pp. 141–4. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (1936), p. 4. *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. XI, pp. 141–3; *Philosophical Correspondence*, pp. 159–61.

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new imperatives of utopian ideals and revolutionary methods—*e.g.*, the reciprocity of means and ends, the role of the independent intellectual, and the relationship between ideals and ideology.

In October 1793 a Berlin editor had written to Kant about the "disgusting" turn taken by the French Revolution, "as all true freedom and morality as well as all art of government and legislation is trodden under foot. . . ." He went on to say: "Of course, the cutting off of heads is easy, especially if one has it done by others." And he expressed his relief that in the September issue of the *Berliner Monatsschrift* Kant had evidently clarified his political position in an article which reconsidered "empty ideals and philosophical dreams—in short, that what sounds all right in theory has no value in practice. . . ." The argument was rather more complex than his correspondent had sensed, for Kant had in point of fact declined to abandon the ideas of a Rousseau or an Abbé de St. Pierre or, indeed, the kind of general theory which outlines what *ought to be* and which, by recommending the earthly powers to act as if this were possible, "by this very action makes it possible." He felt certain that "after many failures Reason will emerge as victorious"; he still counted on "human nature," for he could not and would not believe it to be "so swallowed up in evil that all respect for rights and duties should be quite extinguished in it." Yet the horror of the violent purge remained; and he was later to write:

> No pretended good intention can wipe off the stain of injustice in the means applied. And if it is argued that the whole earth would still be in a lawless condition if those who introduced laws had shied from using violence, this is still no excuse. Nor is it an excuse for political revolutionaries (*Staatsrevolutionisten*) that when constitutions have degenerated, the people must be allowed to reform them by force and to be unjust once and for all in order to establish justice later more safely. . . .

Could a philosopher, even if he wanted to change the world, do any more under the circumstances than interpret it and criticise it? Kant was under no simple-minded illusions about the delimited intellectual task.

> That kings should philosophise or philosophers become kings is not to be expected. Nor is it to be wished, since the possession of power inevitably corrupts the untrammelled judgment of reason. But kings or king-like peoples which rule themselves under laws of equality should not suffer the class of philosophers to disappear or to be silent, but should let them speak openly. This is indispensable to the enlightenment of the business of government. . . .

It was but a modest proposal (More had asked a bit less, Mill would ask for a good bit more); and Kant coupled it with an assurance that philosophers could not be confounded with plotters, propagandists, or lobbyists.[21]

But men of power, then as now, were not so easily persuaded of the virtues of tolerance and the usefulness of reason and philosophy for the enlightened business of government. To "speak openly" was often to invite personal disaster. The lessons of More's caution, Erasmus' fearfulness, and Spinoza's silence were not lost upon Immanuel Kant. His philosophical attempts to "stray beyond the limits" ran similarly afoul of royal Prussian edicts on orthodoxy and censorship. The courageous effort to revise the conventional interpretations of existing doctrine in the light of reason earned only the "great displeasure" of Frederick William who, in 1794, wrote sternly from Berlin to "Our Most Worthy and Erudite Professor and Dear Loyal Kant, Königsberg in Prussia. . . ." It was an "abuse of philosophy" to distort and debase "certain fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture and Christianity." The King was disappointed: "We should have expected better things from you. . . . You must yourself realise how irresponsibly you behave against your duty as a teacher of youth and against Our well-known sovereign intentions. . . ." The royal admonition was ominously straightforward: "In case of continued insubordination, you must unfailingly expect unpleasant consequences." Indeed, the King was pressing his officials to institute proceedings against Kant, and (in a letter to Wöllner) expressed his dissatisfaction with the mildness and the slowness of the censorship. "At Frankfurt there is Steinbart who must be driven out; at Königsberg, Hasse who is a chief radical; of such things as well as of the disgraceful writings of Kant there must be an end. . . . There must be an absolute stop to this disorder."

Kant responded, as he admitted, "most submissively." He gave promises of "obedience"

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[21] Letter of E. G. Biester, 5 October 1793, in *Kant* (ed. Rabel), p. 260. *Metaphysik der Sitten*, in *Werke*, Vol. IV, p. 477. *Perpetual Peace*, p. 34. *Kant*, p. 278.

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and of "not becoming guilty again," as befitted a "most faithful subject." He was then in his 71st year, but survival was all. "I shall in future completely desist from all public lectures or papers concerning religion, be it natural or revealed...." As he later explained, he was choosing his phrases "most carefully"—"so that I should not be deprived of my freedom of judgment in religious matters *for ever*, but only so long as His Majesty was alive" (and, in point of fact, the philosopher survived the king by some seven years). Years before (in a letter to Moses Mendelssohn, in April 1766), Kant had tried to work out, in the face of so many difficulties in truth-telling, a personal principle of compromise: "...The loss of self-respect, which arises from the consciousness of an insincere mind, would be the greatest evil that could ever befall me, but it is quite certain that it will never happen.... It is indeed true that I think many things with the clearest conviction and to my great satisfaction, which I never have the courage to say. But I will never say anything which I do not think...." And in Kant's unpublished papers there is the following remark of ultimate explanation:

> To revoke and deny one's inner conviction is vicious and cannot be demanded of any person, but to remain silent in a case like this is a subject's duty, and while everything a person says must be true, it is not his duty to proclaim publicly all that is true...[22]

THE TEMPORISING PHILOSOPHER'S self-justification has often been subjected to censure. Even in his own day (*viz.* the attitude of the Berlin publisher, Nicolai), Kant's accommodating conduct apparently gave offence. His Berlin editor, Biester, put it to him as gently as he could when he reported that "everyone" regretted the voluntary promise, for it could only mean "a great triumph for the enemies of the Enlightenment" and "the good cause suffers a great loss." It seemed to him that "you did not need to make this promise." Kant should have continued to write on the dangerous topics in question. "Granted, you would then perhaps have had to defend yourself again on specific points. Or you could even have remained silent for the rest of your life but without giving these people the satisfaction of being released from the fear of your words...."

One's attitude depends on the judgment whether or not his subtle distinction between sincerity (*Aufrichtigkeit*) and candour (*Offenherzigkeit*) is viable. "I can admit, though it is much to be deplored," Kant observed in one of his censored books, "that candour (in speaking the *whole* truth which one knows) is not to be found in human nature. But we must be able to demand *sincerity* (that *all that one says* be said with truthfulness), and indeed if there were in our nature no predisposition to sincerity, whose cultivation merely is neglected, the human race must needs be, in its own eyes, an object of the deepest contempt...."[23]

Among his recent critics who have not refrained from the contemptuous note is an American commentator who has written: "...I share with Nietzsche the feeling that Kant is an old Tartuffe. Thus, where others stress Kant's sweetness of character and nobility of purpose, I see the added hues of a petulant dogmatist, annoyed at public indifference to his great work; of a thin-blooded recluse, whose knowledge of human nature lacks depth and subtlety of insight. Others stress Kant's enlightened political views; I see also the half-hearted courage and the conformity to authority of a careful old man...."[24]

There is a nobler tone in the older tradition of Kant criticism. As a 19th-century German biographer puts it:

> It cannot be denied that more discretion than courage is manifested in this solemnly imposed duty of silence. The old man of seventy might have calmly awaited the "unpleasant consequences" threatened by the order. The Berlin authorities could scarcely have done more than to prohibit his writings and perhaps to withdraw the increase of his salary. Nevertheless, Kant was not of the stuff of which martyrs are

[22] *Der Streit der Facultäten* (1798), in *Werke*, Vol. VI, pp. 267–73; *The Quarrel between the Faculties*, in *Kant* (ed. Rabel), pp. 328–30. Friedrich Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant, His Life and Doctrine* (tr. 1902), p. 50. Kant to Moses Mendelssohn, 8 April 1766, in *Vermischte Schriften und Briefwechsel* (ed. Kirchman, 1873), pp. 384–5.

[23] *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. XI, pp. 535–6; *Philosophical Correspondence*, p. 220. *Religion within the Limits of Reason* (tr. Greene-Hudson), p. 178n.; *Werke*, Vol. IV, p. 865n.

[24] Bruce Mazlish, in the Kant chapter of his *The Riddle of History* (1966), p. 123. The lack of fairness and generosity of this view is practically conceded when the critic goes out of his way to quote —"purely *ad hominem*," he admits (p. 116n.)—a remark of the Nazi mass murderer, Adolph Eichmann, to the effect that he had tried to live as best he could "according to Kant's categorical imperative...."

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made. And he might comfort himself with the thought that he had already said all that was most essential. So he chose what was in accord with his nature, silence and peace. Of course, if he had declared, like the seventy-year-old Socrates in a similar position, that he had a higher mission in the world than the professorship which had been entrusted to him by the Royal Prussian Commission, that to this mission of teaching truth and combating error and lies he would not and could not become untrue, then a page of his life history, and a page of the history of German philosophy, would have been more splendidly distinguished than is now the case. . . .[25]

How deeply might Kant have objected? I should like to think that he would have felt not only the personal wound but also the ethical force of the argument. In a fragment found among Kant's *"lose Blätter,"* there is an indirect political comment on this moral dilemma of personal safety and civic obligation: *"Die beste Regierungsform ist nicht die worin es am bequemsten ist zu leben, sondern worin dem Bürger sein Recht am meisten gesichert ist.* (The best form of government is not that in which it is most comfortable to live, but rather that in which the rights of the citizen are most secure)."[26]

HERE, THEN, WAS a revolutionary and a reformer, a utopian and a gradualist, a militant and yet a moderate, an endlessly critical philosopher who knew the temptations of ideology and who even in the bitterness of its deceptions retained a feeling of fellowship for those who wanted to associate imagination with power, for those who "dreamed the sweet dream."

A political artist can rule the world by the power of imagination: for example, when he declaims in the English parliament about the freedom of the people, or in the French Convention about the equality of all classes, as if they really existed. Yet it is better even to have the pretence of the good things which ennoble mankind than to be palpably deprived of them. (*Aber es ist doch besser, auch nur den Schein von dem Besitz dieses die Menschheit Veredelnden Guts für sich zu haben, als sich desselben handgreiflich beraubt zu fühlen. . . .*)[27]

The War of the Temperaments

THIS HIGH-MINDED MESSAGE from Königsberg might not have found its proper relevance in the Paris under the shadow of the guillotine. The pretence of good things? It was an outrageous "as-if" compensation for the palpable deprivations of a grand revolution gone berserk. Was there no more seasonable counsel for a noble generation trapped in an ignoble course of events?

In her philosophical study of revolution, Dr. Hannah Arendt refers to the "notion of a coincidence of foundation and preservation by virtue of augmentation"—but by that she only means that there is an inter-connection between the revolutionary act of beginning "something entirely new" and "conservative care" to shield this new beginning.[28]

This "care" was termed by Mme de Stäel, more old-fashionedly, "moderation": and in full flight from the Terror she did not underestimate the difficulty of holding fast to it.

The more odious the old government, the more agreement there was to overthrow it, and the more difficult it is to distinguish among the various opinions separating those who, united for destruction, are divided in rebuilding. . . .

During a revolution the party that holds moderate opinions needs, more than any other, courage of soul and breadth of mind. It has two struggles to carry on, two kinds of argument to refute, two dangers to avoid. . . .

Some people heap ridicule upon opinions that are removed equally from two conflicting extremes. It is understandable that the two extreme parties should agree in attacking this common enemy. But it is by no means understandable that anyone should dare to call this way of thinking weak and indecisive. People have the knack of reducing everything to extremes in the belief that these are certain to be preferred. Opinions do exist that we must adopt without modification. But are we to allow every lunatic who discovers a new madness to erect a new barrier to the truth? . . .

Clearly she was too involved in the moral and strategic urgencies of the struggle to confront realistically the deeper psycho-mechanisms at work.

Hobbes, in fact, with characteristic toughmindedness, suggested a form of permanent class-war of the extremes *versus* the moderates. (And he cast a cold eye on the perfervid efforts of the men of his own generation to maintain themselves against the obnoxious "Force of Others," not excepting the belated calls of the Liburnes and the Miltons "to shew forth Temperance and Moderation.") "Considering the

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[25] Friedrich Paulsen, *Kant*, pp. 50–51.
[26] Aris, *History of Political Thought in Germany*, p. 100n.
[27] *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (1798), in *Werke*, Vol. IV, p. 485; *Kant*, p. 344.
[28] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1963), p. 203.

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great difference there is in Men," Hobbes wrote, "from the Diversity of the Passions, how some are vainly Glorious and hope for precedencie and superiority above their Fellows, not only when they are equall in Power but also when they are Inferiour; we must needs acknowledge that it must necessarily follow, that those men who are moderate, and look for no more but Equality of Nature, shall be obnoxious to the Force of Others, that will attempt to subdue them. And from hence shall proceed a general dissidence in Mankind, and mutuall fear one of another...."[29]

IT WAS NOT a peculiarly English insight, although when Pierre Bayle made a similar point, with perhaps even more pungency, he was an exile from France and conducting his magisterial argument against apocalyptic visionaries and their extremist passions from the more congenial intellectual atmosphere of Rotterdam. In fact it was in his article on Hobbes (in his *Dictionnaire*, begun in 1695) that Bayle most clearly indicated his disassociation—for all the subsequent misinterpretations of the *philosophes* and their Jacobin followers—with the mind-set of utopian revolution.

> Let a man do the best he can, let him build better systems than Plato's *Republic*, More's Utopia, or Campanella's Commonwealth of the *Sun*, etc. All these fine ideas will be found short and deficient when they come to be reduced to practice. The passions of men, that arise from one another in a prodigious variety, would presently ruin the hopes we had conceived from these fine systems.[30]

"See what happens," Bayle admonishes (and Kant no doubt would have sympathised with the exercise), "when the finest things imaginable" are "found defective when applied to that matter which exists out of our minds, that is, to hard and impenetrable matter...." There was, regrettably, no convenient bridge—and certainly not *Révolution*—between "the speculations of a man who forms a notion of a perfect government" and what Bayle set out as the real "image of human passions." To suppose otherwise would only to indulge in the folly of a Comenius who "filled his brain with Prophecies, Revolutions, the ruining of Anti-Christ, the Millennium, and such like ideas of a dangerous enthusiasm...." For what Bayle detected in the contemporary chiliastic movement—and the so-called secular religions of the future were to share the same characteristics—was the psychological vulnerability of its enthusiasts, the social explosiveness of its programmatic extremism, and the dark tragic potential of its totalist commitment to a future prospect which promised felicity through purificatory violence. Prometheanism tends to bedazzle and blind: and in the fascination with the fire one gets inured to the smoke. "Ye men of learning," Comenius had cried out (and the appeal has not failed to rouse fine spirits in all times[31]), "... see that ye delay not to assist the sacred fire with your sparks, nay, rather with your torches and with your fans...." Bayle, for his part, tried rather to alarm Europe to the burning danger of the *fumo chiliastico*.

Moving profoundly beyond Hobbes' sense of the "obnoxious" conflicts of power and passion, Bayle was the first European thinker to call critical attention to a new fact of modern politics: the making of a revolution requires a prophetic vision, a utopian compound of enthusiasm, certainty, and apocalyptic drama. To this extent Bayle can, in a sense, be taken to be the father of the sociology of revolution (and the founder of such studies in comparative ideology as this). As he tersely observed, "in all ages and countries, Prophecies have been forged in order to excite people to Rebellion (*de tous tems, & en tout païs, on a supposé des Prophéties pour porter les peuples à la revolte*)...." He concluded with what must surely be one of the most percipient—and, ironically enough, prophetic as well—thoughts of the whole first classic century of utopian revolutionism:

> ... for it is a very powerful engine for bringing about great revolutions, to prepare the people by explications of the Apocalypse, uttered with an air of inspiration and enthusiasm. (*Car c'est une trés-puissante machine pour amener sur la scène les grande Révolutions, que d'y préparer les peuples par des explications apocalyptiques, debitées avec des airs d'inspiration & d'enthousiasme.*)[32]

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[29] *"A quels signes peut-on connaître quelle est l'opinion de la majorité de la nation?"* (1791), in *Madame de Staël* (1964, ed. Berger), pp. 103–4. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore Politico* (1650), pp. 2–3. *The Life Records of John Milton* (ed. French, 1954), Vol. III, pp. 217–19.

[30] *Selections from Bayle's Dictionary* (ed. Beller & Lee, 1952), p. 133.

[31] The passage is cited by Dorothy Waley Singer in her eloquent contribution for the wartime anti-Hitler tribute to Comenius: *The Teacher of Nations* (ed. Needham, 1942), p. 73.

[32] Bayle, *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (5me. ed., 1740), Vol. II, p. 308; Vol. III, p. 22. *A General Dictionary, Historical and Critical* (tr. 1736), Vol. IV, p. 648; Vol. VI, p. 572.

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What is overpowering in Bayle—one is almost tempted also to call it premature—are these remarkable and prescient double-focused insights into the dual modern pattern of absolutist aspiration. The utopian revolutionaries chose to believe that what held true for men of religion could only be utterly irrelevant to men of reason and secular hope; they could never accept that both types of enthused total commitment shared the same forms of the political imagination. As modern utopianism developed, the apocalypse no more belonged to ancient theological dogma than revolution belonged to medieval astrological fancy. Both were part and parcel of what must be seen as the elementary forms of the ideological life, shaped in point of fact by the same imperious images of language and vagarious turns of temperament which Bayle had detected in Comenius, Hobbes in Milton, and Kant in the *Schwärmer* of his own day. Utopian revolutionary was but apocalyptic enthusiast writ different.

After such knowledge what remained of hope and purposefulness? Bayle grasped more poignantly than any other intellectual of his epoch the distressing implications of a position which, like Kant's own a century later, deprived itself so candidly of all the easy supports of optimism and certitude. There is indeed in some of Bayle's troubled asides a foreshadowing of two profound themes which will plague for centuries the subsequent career of the European intelligentsia. They can, I think, be put and illustrated in the following way.

1. The tragedy of the man in the middle. Of one contemporary effort to hold to a reasonably neutral balance, Bayle wrote these memorable lines:

> ... it was in vain that he hoped to stand upon the shore, a quiet spectator of the boisterousness of that sea. He found himself more exposed to the storm than if he had been in either of the fleets. This is the inevitable fate of those who pretend to keep a neutrality. They are exposed to the insults of both parties at once, and they obtain enemies without procuring themselves friends. Whereas, by espousing with zeal either of these two causes, they have friends as well as enemies. A deplorable destiny of man, a manifest vanity of philosophic reason! It makes us look upon the tranquillity of the soul and the calmness of the passions as the end of all our labours, and the most precious fruit of our most painful meditations. And yet experience shows that as to the world there is no condition more unfortunate than that of friends who will not devote themselves to the waves of faction....
>
> Such men as howl with the wolves have the advantage of not knowing they are in the wrong, for no men are less capable of seeing the faults of their faction and the good that may be found in the other party than those who are controlled by a fiery zeal and a quick resentment, and who are under the power of strong prejudice.... They will not be a hammer, and, therefore, they are an anvil upon which both sides beat continually. (*Ils ne veulent point être marteau, et cela fait que continuellement ils sont enclume à droite et à gauche.*)[33]

From Bayle to Mme. de Staël to Albert Camus, it is this "deplorable destiny" between hammer and anvil that the intellectual historian has to confront: the struggle to hold out against the boisterous sea, to resist the waves of faction, to escape the howling wolves, to rise above the controlling powers of zeal, resentment, and prejudice *à droite et à gauche*. Its splendours and miseries will be as mixed as these metaphors.

Bayle knew, then, the "inconveniences of moderation," the tormenting implications of a reluctance "to adhere either to those who maintained the abuses, or to those who opposed them": for he thought "both too violent" and said, with Tully, "*Quem fugiamo habeo, quem sequar non habeo*, I know whom to avoid, but not whom to follow...." Yet why is it that this effort of "philosophic reason" to transcend the two warring causes should be felt to be condemned to an "inevitable fate"? Bayle's work pointed to a simple theorem which from time to time tempts the historian of ideas but rarely finds expression with so much grim, elemental candour.

2. The historical amnesia of each new generation. Was this, then, the original sin of the European spirit? What of progress, and cumulative wisdom, and the lessons of the past? "No!" Bayle cries out, more in sorrow than in scepticism, "The world is too unteachable to profit by the follies of past ages. Every age behaves as if it were the first...." He thought, with no little bitterness, that the historical spectacle of "a thousand dark passions" ought at least to produce in men "a salutary and mortifying humiliation"—but no: "The worst is, men do not profit by what is past; every generation betrays the same symptoms...."[34]

[33] Howard Robinson, *Bayle the Sceptic* (1931), pp. 177–8; *Dictionnaire* (ed. 1820), Vol. VI, pp. 214–15; *General Dictionary*, Vol. V, p. 74.

[34] *Dictionnaire*, Vol. I, pp. 22, 184: "*Non ... le monde est trop indisciplinable pour profiter des maladies des Siècles passez. Chaque siècle se comporte comme s'il étoit le prémier venu.... Le pis est qu'on ne profite pas du passé: chaque génération fournit les mêmes symptômes....*"

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Symptoms of Historical Amnesia

I RETURN TO my point of departure, to Mme. de Staël, and not because she offered any unforgettable solution but because she is, memory for memory, so much part of the problem: the symptomology of recurrent bouts of historical amnesia. Let me recall here her desperate mid-revolutionary plea on behalf of the moderate party and the men in the noble middle:

> Far from rallying to itself feeble and timid souls, this party needs more than any other the courage that braves all kinds of distrust and danger. It must impress by the boldness of its character those whom it heartens by the wisdom of its opinions. It must be itself and not some absurd mixture or an irrelevant alternative to opposed extremes. It must, in short, demonstrate to all that reason is not a shade of meaning between extremes, but the primary colour....[35]

In language and in sentiment, this is the true and, alas, forlorn French longing. A century-and-a-half later Albert Camus, pressed by his great radical antagonist, Jean-Paul Sartre, was still dreaming of the third choice, of the moderate party, and went back for refuge to Heraclitus, "the inventor of the constant change of things who nevertheless set a limit to this perpetual process," and even further, to Nemesis, "the goddess of moderation and the implacable enemy of the immoderate." For it was against Sartre, unnamed and overwhelming, that Camus had written his manifesto on behalf of *l'homme revolté*: a curious title this, comprehensible only in the intimate context of French intellectual polemic. The passage which (I had always suspected it, and he once confirmed it to me) first formulated for Camus the deep difference between him and Sartre, between the rebel and the revolutionary, is a passing paragraph in Sartre's little book on *Baudelaire*. Let me give our last great committed revolutionary his due by citing it.[36]

> The revolutionary [says Sartre, speaking for himself and, no doubt, Mme de Beauvoir] wants to change the world; he transcends it and moves towards the future, towards an order of values which he himself invents. The rebel is careful to preserve the abuses from which he suffers so that he can go on rebelling against them. He always shows signs of a bad conscience and of something resembling a feeling of guilt. He does not want to destroy or transcend the existing order; he simply wants to rise up against it. The more he attacks it, the more he secretly respects it. In the depths of his heart he preserves the rights which he challenges in public. If they disappeared, his own *raison d'être* would disappear with them. He would suddenly find himself plunged into a gratuitousness which frightens him....

Nothing, I trust, could be clearer: except, possibly, that characteristic and revealing remark in the second volume of Simone de Beauvoir's autobiography where, speaking for herself and, no doubt, Sartre, she refers to their friend, Raymond Aron, as a "despised" moderate, and goes on to explain: "We were temperamentally opposed to the idea of reform: society, we felt, could change only as a result of sudden cataclysmic upheaval on a global scale...."[37]

Bagehot's (and Tocqueville's) French intellectuals—clever, versatile, excitable, volatile, never reforming, always transforming—have come full turn. In their end is their beginning. The King is on his way to the scaffold. The cataclysm is upon us, the globe is in upheaval. All present things will be destroyed at once. Guiltless and without conscience, they embrace an anonymous future in the name of invented but undisclosed values. The sweet dream has become inviolate dogma. The revolution remains their utopia.

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[35] *Madame de Staël* (ed. Berger), p. 107.

[36] Albert Camus, *L'Homme Revolté* (1951); *The Rebel* (tr. Bower, 1953). Jean-Paul Sartre, *Baudelaire* (1947), pp. 58–9; (tr. Turnell, 1949), p. 50.

[37] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life* (tr. Green, 1962), p. 30. The whole passage from this memoir of the 1930s has a certain topical interest in the recent revival of Paris ideological controversy.

"We saw a good deal of Raymond Aron.... He was a member of the Socialist Party, an organisation which we despised—firstly on the grounds that it was infiltrated by the bourgeoisie, and secondly because we were temperamentally opposed to the idea of reform: society, we felt, could change only as a result of sudden cataclysmic upheaval on a global scale. But we hardly ever talked politics with Aron. Mostly he and Sartre argued bitterly about problems of philosophy. I took no part in these discussions, since my mind moved too slowly for them; nevertheless I found myself more often than not on Aron's side....

"Aron enjoyed critical analysis, and set himself to tear Sartre's rash syntheses to bits. He had the knack of getting his opponent in the fork of a dilemma and then crushing him with one sharp hammer stroke. 'There are two alternatives, *mon petit camarade*,' he would say. 'Take your choice.'... Sartre struggled hard to avoid being cornered, but as there was more imagination than logic in his mental processes, he had his work cut out. I cannot recall one occasion on which he convinced Aron—or on which Aron succeeded in shaking Sartre's own beliefs...."

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Column

To call ourselves a sick society has become the greatest of all contemporary platitudes, and surely no age has ever been quite so plentifully endowed with prophets of the wrath to come. From right and left, young and old, they thunder at us, Marcuse, Muggeridge, Chomsky, Cohn-Bendit, Tynan—the list is endless—and their fervour is so compelling that we only occasionally wonder whether the sickness is not in ourselves but in those who denounce it. Moreover, behind the, as it were, major prophets there follows a host of minor ones, for every Jeremiah there is an army of Micahs and Amoses, each no doubt perfectly sincere in vision of sin, yet all apparently equally willing, even eager, to accept the rich rewards, the foundation grants, the university chairs, the television contracts, which society showers today on its critics and detractors. Not the stake, but a television series is the martyrdom of a modern Savonarola.

No doubt this is all very well, and Jeremiahs and Savonarolas are a very good thing in their way. Every age deserves, and needs, one or two of them, but when they pop up everywhere, one begins to doubt whether the mantle of the prophet can be quite so easily and painlessly acquired, as if it were one of the newest models from Marks and Spencer or C & A Modes.

Nowhere does this cloud of witnesses to the doom which is upon us cast its shadow more sombrely than in the pages of our Sunday supplements. Week after week our attention is sternly directed, in one of these portentous "surveys" which seem to combine the correct air of moral and social earnestness with a nice eye for advertising appeal, to the devastation caused among us by sex, drugs, crime, homosexuality, teenage delinquency, sex, drugs, race, divorce, money, sex, drugs... and so on in a kind of *ewige Wiederkehr* in which one aspect of our shame is no sooner investigated than the next is ready to take its place. An assiduous reader of surveys, who might manage to survive their indescribable tedium, might well be forgiven for concluding that the representative figure of our time was a kind of combination between Enoch Powell and Nikolai Stavrogin; he might even begin to worry why he was not more like him.

Even so, from time to time, the supply of material begins to run short; with the best will in the world one cannot provide a new book of revelations every week. Yet the appetite for them, once stimulated, appears to be insatiable (at least in the editors, if not the readers, of our Sunday press), so that our moral and social investigations, having traversed (and for how many times!) the main thoroughfares, the M-1's, as it were, of our present discontents, are sometimes forced into their byways and country lanes.

The Observer, having temporarily exhausted, or having bored itself to death with, the potentialities of both the Affluent and the Sick Society, has now made the startling discovery that we are also a Sad Society, "an expanding world where there is a blight of previously neglected poverty: emotional poverty," and is now busily occupied with "a major series of interlinked reports" documenting "the broken heart of the problem of the new poor."

It is perhaps unnecessary to point out that nothing could be sadder or sicker than the prose in which the *Observer* chooses to announce its new series; people who write like this should really be debarred by law from investigating other people's broken hearts until they have mended the cracks in their own. Karl Kraus long ago pointed out, in his unremitting war against the *Neue Wiener Presse*, that the strongest symptom of the sickness of an age is the prose in which newspapers, especially "class" newspapers, write about it. It would perhaps be unfair to suggest that the prose of the *Observer*'s announcement, sickly, tired and inflated, as of a Patience Strong or a Miss Lonelyhearts turned sociologist, exhibits precisely the kind of "emotional poverty" which forms the ostensible subject of its splendid new series. Yet one's suspicions are strengthened that its *dramatis personae* are once again those who have figured *ad nauseam* in our Sunday supplements in recent years; the drug addict, the homosexual, the alcoholic, the recidivist, the victims of broken marriages. Some people, the *Observer* tells us, are all of these things at the same time, forming a kind of composite Frankenstein monster of the *Observer*'s own making, who I'm sure will one day talk to the *Observer* with the same "great freedom and frankness" as the subjects of its present series.

And of course the "new poor" are only too glad to be photographed by the *Observer*; only where have I seen those mournful, hangdog faces before, or faces very like them, unless in precisely similar series previously published in the *Sunday Times* or the *Observer* about the victims of our present society. In my wilder moments I sometimes dream that our more ex-

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pensive Sunday newspapers maintain somewhere in their basements a permanent cast of characters selected for facial characteristics which can be used at any moment to illustrate a series on the Affluent, Sick, Sad Society. What's more, as the series roll interminably on, they're kept pretty busy; the job's no sinecure.

THE JUSTIFICATION for all this is, of course, the implied claim that the "new poor," the sad, the unhappy, the emotionally disturbed, are in some significant way representative of our society as they never have been of any other. I know of no method, either analytical or statistical, by which such a claim could be verified and indeed rather suspect that the reverse of it may be true; that in fact today society is characterised not by the number or the condition of those who live in emotional or material poverty, but rather of those to whom life offers a large degree both of emotional and material satisfaction.

To justify this impression would of course be just as impossible as to demonstrate its opposite; even today, despite all the efforts of our sociologists, both professional and amateur, the annals of the poor remain far too short and simple to provide any basis of comparison between past and present societies in respect of the degree of happiness or unhappiness suffered or enjoyed by the overwhelming majority of their members. It would be wiser perhaps to remember the Biblical injunction that the poor, new or old, are always with us. I wish indeed that present-day critics and investigators of society would sometimes read the Bible. It would provide them with far better Sunday reading that most of their own productions; it would almost certainly improve their prose style, except in cases where that is beyond repair; it might even remind them that the poor, more especially the poor in spirit, are promised a better fate than to provide the material for a Sunday supplement.

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I AM PERHAPS unduly prejudiced against, and irritated by the *Observer*'s free and frank revelations about the "new poor" because for the last month I have been living in the country, and what impresses one most there is not the miseries of human existence but rather the immense progress that has been made, particularly in recent years, in what is after all still Britain's largest single industry; it is a progress which is reflected not only in the condition of the land itself but in the lives of those who live by it.

Anyone who has read the Hammonds' *The Village Labourer* will remember how almost unbearably constricted, both materially and spiritually, the lives of the rural poor once were, and history is full of the savage outbreaks of violence and despair to which they were repeatedly driven by their condition. Today, in this country at least, it is almost inconceivable that such things should have occurred; today, it is not the "new poor" who are in evidence on the land, but the new prosperity of the rural labourer and the genuine opportunities of satisfaction which it has brought him.

I myself, in my particular cottage, can hardly claim to share that prosperity. It is situated very nearly in the exact geographical heart of England, not thirty miles from the huge industrial conurbation of Birmingham and its neighbouring towns, and only one hour and twenty minutes by train from London. Yet there is no road to it, and it has neither electricity nor gas. My wife is a genuine object of commiseration to the farm labourers' wives who are our nearest neighbours because she has no refrigerator, no electric iron, no vacuum cleaner, most of all of course no television, all of which they regard as the indispensable minimum of a civilised existence.

Of course, for a city dweller, this primitive mode of life has priceless compensations. On all sides I look out on a landscape which, in its smiling greenery, at this moment broken by golden fields of corn, has a particular beauty that could not be found anywhere outside of England; every window frames a Constable, and as far as the horizon in every direction there is hardly an artefact to be seen that has not been a part of the landscape for at least two hundred years. Buzzards swoop overhead; at night badgers play in the wood and in warm weather bring out their bedding to air.

To the countryman of course, and especially to his wife, such things do not make up for the cottage's notable lack of consumer durables; entering a labourer's cottage today, as well equipped as if it were in the heart of London, one finds it hard to believe that not long ago most of them would have contained only a few sticks of furniture. The truth is that no labourer today would consent to live in my cottage, and that is the only reason why, at a time when the price of country cottages, and of land itself, is rising to what would once have seemed fantastic heights, I am fortunate enough to live in it.

Yet the life I lead there is in no way an isolated one, abstracted from the world of human activity. Even the peace and silence which reign there are, though real enough, also to some extent an illusion, for they disguise what is in fact a scene of intense industry. For

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the countryside around us is alive, not only with the animal creation, but with every kind of agricultural machine, representing a large investment of capital which has to be made to work if it is to show an adequate return. Over the brow of the hill, on an early morning, suddenly appears a swarm of tractors, advancing like a troop of tanks going into action and fanning out to their tasks in various fields; for the last few weeks, in farm buildings where they have rested for the remainder of the year, huge combine harvesters have been carefully inspected and tested so that, when the harvest begins, they can in a few short days earn their keep for the rest of the year.

THIS TRANSFORMATION of the land, and of agriculture, in recent years seems to me a great and beneficent revolution, and it is no less striking because it has been a peaceful and gradual one. Among other things, it provides the best protection for the countryside, which we are only slowly coming to recognise as one of the most priceless of national assets; in the long run only a healthy and prosperous agriculture will save the countryside from the depredations of speculators and developers and the sometimes almost unbelievable philistinism of government departments and public authorities.

But it is not only the land which has been transformed; so have the lives of the men and women who work to make it productive. Machinery has changed agricultural labour from a life of arduous and unrewarding toil into a skill as advanced as any that is practised in the city, and has given the village labourer a leisure, and the means to enjoy it, which he has never known before. His intellectual horizons have broadened and the very nature of his work, as it is today, demands of him educational standards to which he could once never have aspired. In their free hours today the village labourer and his wife look and behave like any city dweller, except that they remain slightly slower of speech and are less addicted to sartorial eccentricities; mini-skirts in the country are slightly less miniscule and girls pay greater attention to their appearance. To be dirty and unkempt is not regarded as a blow for freedom but as a breach of good manners which puts one out of the marriage market.

I must confess that in this kind of society I can detect few or no signs of the sickness or sadness to which the Sunday supplements attach so much significance. Certainly some people are unhappy but their unhappiness is no different in kind from what it has ever been. I sometimes wonder what the rural population make of their Sunday papers, to which they are much addicted, as children are to comics, news from such a foreign and fairy-tale country, whose manners and morals are utterly strange to them, but all the more fascinating because of that.

Does this mean then that the sickness which fascinates our modern diagnosticians of society is exclusively urban in origin and nature and that in this respect therefore there is now between town and country a greater gap than ever before? This is so patently untrue, and so utterly at variance with the growing assimilation between urban and rural patterns of life that it can safely be dismissed. The truth, I think, is rather otherwise; it is that except for a very narrow, confined, and essentially middle-class sector of urban society, in any community with which one comes into close contact today one is struck less by those "marks of weakness, marks of woe" which Blake once saw in every London street than by the evidence of an increase in happiness and satisfaction. Could it not be that sadness and sickness are very much in the eye of *The Observer*?

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THEATRE

Worshipping the Life Force, Disliking Life

By John Weightman

IT IS INTERESTING that the National Theatre, whether by accident or design, should have timed its new presentation of *Back to Methuselah* to coincide more or less with the American moon-landing. Shaw's sermon in five, slightly dramatised parts is an attempt to say something about human life in the perspective of the universe. The production by Clifford Williams emphasises the point beautifully with the help of revolving globes, flickering electronic patterns and inter-stellar noises, which remind us at once of what we were watching on television only a few weeks ago. But on television, the welter of technology was not accompanied by any philosophical ideas. The incredibly brave astronauts seemed to be able to do what they did, precisely because they had no philosophy appropriate to their situation. Scientific wizards they may be, but the metaphysical part of their nature is frozen in the attitude of the good all-American boy who believes in the flag and goes unquestioningly to church on Sundays. And when President Nixon welcomed them back, he sounded uncannily like a Shavian caricature of a politician—like Joyce Burge, in fact, in Part II, *The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas*. His famous remark about this being the greatest week since the Creation, which blithely missed out the Revelation he is officially supposed to believe in, would have seemed rather broad, if Shaw had invented it. And generally speaking, he was jolly and non-metaphysical to an astonishing degree.

Back to Methuselah provides a corrective. It is now fifty years old, and it was always a ramshackle extravaganza rather than the world classic Shaw hoped it might be, but at least it is still metaphysically apposite and forces us to reflect on the implications of these various spheres suspended so puzzlingly in space.

WHATEVER ONE MAY think of the doctrine that Shaw puts forward in his preface or in the different parts of his "Metabiological Pentateuch," there can be no doubt that he sees the problem quite clearly. Man happens to find himself, on this tiny unit in the universe, as the provisional outcome of an evolutionary geological, biological, cultural, etc., process. He can trace some of its stages, but he does not know how or why it originated, or where it is going. This is the basic philosophical worry: What are we doing here? Then the process itself involves features which are scandalous to the human mind. Life feeds on life; man is hostile to man; creatures are "imperfect"; each individual life blooms and dies incomprehensibly; not to mention the fact that, independently of the physiological cycle, the physical world often haphazardly destroys the life it has created. This is the second philosophical worry: Why is life complicated by the various forms of evil?

Now an agnostic would maintain that, although man is naturally led to ask such questions and that they must form the background to any serious thinking about life, they are by definition unanswerable. Man is inside the universe as a given part of it, and it stands to reason that the part cannot understand the whole. The major religions claim, of course, that the whole has revealed something of itself to the parts, but the so-called explanations of religion—for instance, about this life being a trial run for Eternity or Nirvana—explain nothing at all, since they fail to tell us why a trial run should be necessary. The variety of religious invention is fascinating, but at best it merely serves to keep the basic questions alive in an atmosphere of poetic vibration. A cathedral looks like an assertion, but all those stones are just the obverse side of an interrogation.

Shaw, however, is not an agnostic, and *Back to Methuselah* would be his cathedral, if words were as solid as stones. Like Bergson, from whom he presumably borrowed his central concept of the Life-Force, he is the kind of person who cannot bear to leave the unanswerable questions unanswered. He wants to assert—indeed, his nature drives him to assert—and one of the pleasures of listening to his plays comes from the

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fact that each brisk, intelligent sentence acts like a little injection of certainty. If I remember rightly, it was V. S. Pritchett who wrote somewhere that to experience Shaw's prose is like drinking gin; at first you feel elated and then, as the evening wears on, you wonder why the lift is becoming less and less noticeable. I think I now know. Shaw rejected the Christian revelation, only to fall back on to his own do-it-yourself religion, which is composed of scientific fact, biblical nostalgia and synthetic myth-making, and which is not up to the level of his general intelligence. In his best plays—in *Pygmalion*, say, or *The Apple Cart*—this religion is not obtrusive, and his profound impatience with life has not yet carried him out beyond the problems of ordinary living. *Back to Methuselah* is the least satisfactory of his major works, because it is meant as a direct expression of his religion, and he is sketching out gratuitous patterns which are hardly valid either as poetic allegory or as direct comment on life. They are chiefly interesting as a document about the mind of a man who couldn't rest in a state of unknowing.

PART I, *In the Beginning*, is a re-hash of the Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel stories, and is meant to say something about sex, pugnacity, and the life-process. These are obvious mysteries. Why, instead of enjoying total being, should each of us have only one sex, that is, be constantly looking for, or adjusting to, the supposed other half? Then, why should life be competition as much as cooperation, that is, why is nature red in tooth and claw?

On the first point, Shaw says that Lilith, the earth-mother, found the burden of total being too heavy to bear alone and so brought forth Adam and Eve, who could start the cycle of reproduction and death. Why did she find the burden too heavy? No answer. Why had Being to be inserted in Time, by means of sexuality and death? Again no answer. All we can be sure of is that Shaw *wants* to see life as a process with a meaning, because the Life-Force must be going Somewhere.

However, it is clear that he dislikes sex. When Eve is told about it by the Serpent, an expression of "overwhelming repugnance" comes over her face and she buries her head in her hands. In Part V, when evolution has reached an advanced stage, individuals are already sexually adult when born, and all the sexual business is over and done with by the time they are four. It is curious that Shaw should respect the Life-Force and have so little patience with the means that the Life-Force employs. His revulsion cannot be simply the reaction of an elderly man whose glands have gone dead on him. The exasperation with sex runs through his work, and he himself contracted a *mariage blanc* when he was barely forty, and seems to have had comparatively little physical experience at any time. Possibly he looked upon the expenditure of energy in sex as a waste, because life has a Purpose, for which energy should be saved. This is to suppose (*1*) that sexual energy is always convertible into other, good activities, an assumption which is more than doubtful; and (*2*) that man should practice an economy which runs counter to the extraordinary wastefulness of the Life-Force in so many areas. Although Shaw behaves as if he believes in the Life-Force, at the same time he has an itch to correct its functioning.

A COMPARABLE AMBIGUITY is noticeable in his treatment of the struggle for life. He shows Cain, the man of war, debating with Adam, who cultivates the arts of peace, and Cain, strangely enough, gets the better of the argument, although it is his destructiveness which jeopardises the future of mankind. The reason may be that Shaw is instinctively pugnacious and, in a sense, believes in the survival of the fittest or, at least, in the necessity of their dominion over the less fit. Part of him is still in sympathy with the amoral Darwinian Evolutionism, which he is trying so hard to overcome. His own literary technique is one of command and dismissal. He has a feeling for the great commanders and conquerors, Caesar, Joan of Arc, and Napoleon. When, in Part IV, the Long-Livers propose to eliminate the Short-Livers on the grounds of inefficiency, his defence of the latter, which is put into the mouth of a caricature of himself, is only half-hearted. Although he makes the parson in Part II say: "God counts foreigners," *i.e.*, all individuals have their validity in relationship to the Life-Force, the Superman is still at the back of his mind and his approach is undoubtedly hierarchical. People with a lot of vitality are attractive to him, because vitality equals Life-Force, even when it is blind and ultimately suicidal. It is true that he hints at the paradox in the Napoleonic episode in Part IV, but he can hardly be said to deal with it adequately.

Another interesting twist is the implication that Abel deserved to be murdered, because it was he who first killed animals for food. Shaw's vegetarianism appears to have no medical foundation; it is based on metaphysical disgust at the fact that living creatures eat each other. For some human sensibilities—and I personally share the attitude—it is profoundly illogical, in other words evil, that animate nature should prey upon itself. Shaw thinks he can mitigate

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the evil by sticking to vegetables,[1] which have no recognisable consciousness, but this is no more than a pathetic gesture in the face of the universal cannibalism of Nature. The Life-Force must have created the jungle, which is permanently shocking from the human point of view.

AS BECOMES ABUNDANTLY CLEAR after Part I, the Life-Force is itself a naïve and unsatisfactory concept. Bergson invented it, and Shaw adopted it, in order to escape from what the Existentialists were later to define as the awareness of contingency. Bergson imagined that the *élan vital* was injected into humanity by God from outside through the medium of saints and other great men, each of whom receives a partial revelation. In the end, the *élan vital* will work like leaven through the whole of mankind and men will become equal with God.

Shaw modified this slightly; his Life-Force is within creation and just happens to be using man as one of the possibilities of achieving its ultimate, undefined Purpose. The burden of the argument in Parts II, III, and IV is that man, if he is to survive, must turn himself into a higher species, and the first step is to get into the habit of living at least 300 years, so as to become sufficiently wise and experienced to settle political problems rationally. But how does one acquire the habit? Shaw, like Bergson, cannot make up his mind whether progress depends on God or on the human will. Bergson seems to think that it is the duty of ordinary men to make themselves receptive to the *élan vital*, but he never explains why we are not all equally receptive to it in the first instance, or why God doesn't pump in more *élan vital*, if more should appear to be necessary. Shaw, for his part, says three quite contradictory things: (*1*) if we want to live 300 years, our biological make-up will adjust itself spontaneously; (*2*) whether we want to or not, the Life-Force will select some of us to go on living; (*3*) if we don't extend our life-span, the Life-Force will discard us and try to work through some other species. He might as well say: "God may, or may not, have made it possible for you to lift yourself up by your own boot-strings, but if you don't, He will punish you for it."

IN FACT, I THINK this is what he *is* saying in the last resort. There is a good deal of God-hatred in him, as can be seen from certain episodes in *The Black Girl in Search of God*. And the Life-Force itself, although it is a form of the belief in God, is basically a tragic concept, since it involves putting one's faith in the forward movement—a pure abstraction, leading nobody knows where—because the incidental phenomena of existence are unsatisfactory. Part V is really very sad. Humanity has now achieved indefinite life, but death can still occur through a physical accident, because man has not conquered his contingent relationship to external natural forces and consciousness is still at the mercy of matter. If a Shavian Ancient, thousands of years hence, can be destroyed haphazardly by a falling tree, humanity is still stuck with the problem of the Lisbon earthquake that bothered Voltaire or the plague that bothered Camus. Politics no longer exist; love and art are juvenile activities, which the Ancients quickly abandon in order to reflect on the properties of the universe. But, in Part IV, Shaw had already dismissed scientific reflection on the universe as myth-destroying and anti-poetic, so what do the Ancients think about? They have still not been let into the secret of the universe, so they cannot be musing on that. I suspect that they are facing blank nothingness and wishing they were God, which is the position that most of us are in already, when we turn our gaze upon the ultimate mysteries. And if you are thinking about nothing, does it matter whether you do so for one year or a thousand?

My conclusion is, then, that *Back to Methuselah* is every bit as entertaining as a visit to church, and very similar. It ends, indeed, with a kind of pie-in-the-sky. "It is enough that there is a Beyond," intones the voice of Lilith, in the pseudo-poetic epilogue. It is amazing that Shaw could make the same sort of statement as the fish in Rupert Brooke's excellent poem:

> *"This life cannot be all," they swear,*
> *"For how unpleasant if it were!"*

[1] His housekeeper reveals that he ate eggs. Fortunately for those of us who are squeamish about meat, eggs look like mineral objects.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from Germany

Artists & LSD

"HERE there are a lot of llamas... there is a giraffe... and here is a cowboy," the painter Heinz Trökes explained. He was not trying to reduce travel experience in Africa and America to a common denominator, but was under the influence of *LSD*, and was trying to explain (to Richard Hartmann) the picture he had just been painting.

Hartmann, whose subject of study is the marginal areas of art and artists on the margin of society, is a physician, the owner of a picture gallery in the Franz-Josef-Strasse in Munich, and himself a practising artist. In recent years he has put on several exhibitions devoted to "the art of the mentally ill" (not without continually emphasising that this is an equation between two unknowns). Then he changed course and experimented with artists who voluntarily took *LSD* under his supervision and then set about their usual work in these unusual circumstances.

The question is not new, and has always been in the background when explanations have been sought for the cultures of ancient Mexico, the pictures of Hieronymus Bosch, or the work of Baudelaire, but it can expect to rouse greater and probably more realistic interest at a time when a whole generation is taking "trips." What is the effect of hallucinogenic drugs on individuals credited in normal circumstances with a greater than normal sensibility, with a mental constitution not be judged by so-called commonsense standards? Is the effect of these drugs disturbing or intensifying to artistic creativity, or are they perhaps capable of helping a hitherto only moderately productive individual to manifest a shy genius? This last theory is the one most likely to gain public credence, though not unaccompanied by a slight shudder of discomfort.

The products which have now been exhibited at the Brumme gallery in Frankfurt are less extreme than preconceived theories based on excited imagination, and are not sensational enough to please the fanatics on either side. Nothing conclusive emerges from them, though they amount to more than a chance collection of as many cases as the artists who took part. An experiment based on twenty artists can hardly claim to be scientifically conclusive; but the care with which Hartmann conducted it gives it a certain validity.

HE DEVOTED ABOUT a week to each case. In each instance the dosage was decided on only after long consultation and with regard to the individual's constitution, and he was present during the experiment and carefully recorded its progress. What happened when these artists took *LSD*? What happened to Hundertwasser, Hoehme, Goetz, Grzimek, Trökes, Hrdlicka, Häfner? How did they work with *LSD* and without it? Examples of both are hung in the exhibition at Frankfurt. In a minority of cases the reaction was extreme. The obviously very normal constitution of Friedrich Hundertwasser very successfully resisted the attempted interference with his robust imagination. He just felt sick. He refused to work in that condition, swore like a trooper, and declared that, so far as he was concerned, the experiment was over. There were also no visible results in the case of Gerd Hoehme. Severe pain at the back of his head (apparently of psycho-somatic origin attributable to war experience) made him incapable of working. Apart from these extreme individual reactions, however, some characteristic results were observable.

The least exciting outcome was when the effect on the artist's work was nil. The pictures painted by C. O. Goetz under the influence of *LSD* are indistinguishable from those he painted previously. More numerous are the cases in which greater differences are observable, and these can be sub-divided into those in which the difference is mainly formal and those in which it is mainly thematic. Alfred Hrdlicka, for instance, whose critically reflective drawings show him to be both an intellectual artist and a technical perfectionist, subsides into caricature; primitive shapes, drawn with crude gusto, emerge. In the case of the sculptor Waldemar Grzimek, the loss of form is even greater; in his attempts to draw a female figure, the anatomical details develop into problems insoluble with the charcoal pencil. An almost complete disappearance of the sense of form also leads to the collapse of Heinz Trökes' efforts to realise even partially on paper his freshly perceived fantastic world. The experience breaks down into its component parts; the impulse to epitomise a world of dissociated images is lost, and all that remains is a primary shape to which he clings with difficulty—a tremulous spiral.

But art did not in every case dissolve so harmoniously into its variegated components as it did in the case of Heinz Trökes, and the in-

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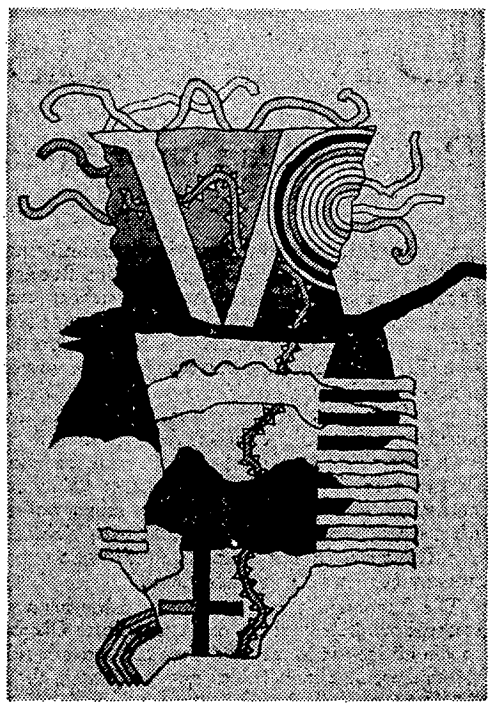
dividual abstracted from himself and his abilities was not always compensated for the loss by a glimpse of better worlds (even if they were populated only by llamas, giraffes and cowboys). True, Heinz Trökes will no doubt have gladly paid the price of a new and unprecedented experience by having painted what for him were two bad pictures. When part of the experiment was repeated for television, Werner Schreib, to whom it was new, seemed unusually peaceable to those who knew him as otherwise slightly *exalté* and aggressive, and he chatted away happily while covering the paper with drawings. But to Manfred Garstka, for instance, the *LSD* experiment was a sheer nightmare. The attempt to master (by having recourse to art) the anxiety and the horrid visions that continually threatened to overwhelm him was a total failure, and he had nothing left with which to stave off some overpowering sense of doom. "I held fast to painting," he said afterwards, "for it was the only thing I had to cling to to save myself from total submergence in an inferno. I felt and suffered every kind of fear, menace and sense of annihilation on this 'trip'." The television viewer could see what it looked like in practice in the case of Eberhard Eggers. His tormented stammering and stuttering and the agonised effort with which he moved the pencil over the paper were far more effective than any well-documented anti-*LSD* pamphlet—although that was hardly the intention.

Only two artists, Eberhard Eggers and Thomas Häfner, succeeded in keeping track of themselves, holding the pictures in their minds and transferring them to canvas, and in only one instance, that of Eggers, did the extension of mental experience involve a discernible increase in artistic ability. But, speaking generally, *LSD* does not seem able to make artists out of non-artists. It appears merely to lower the level of those who are artists already. This may have been a somewhat comforting experience to the artists and surely a disappointing one to would-be artists and to a public that would like to explain away the non-bourgeois world by its use of artificial stimulants (thus demonising it). After the results of this experiment, however, the complex and fluid artistic personality seemed to be so disturbed by the violent and uncontrollable intervention of drugs that it is thrown completely off the rails.

THE FACT THAT NONE of those who took part in the experiment afterwards regretted it, and that none of them would have missed it, is only superficially inconsistent with this, because after all sensitivity and susceptibility to stimuli are as much part of the artist's life as is the thick



HEINZ TRÖKES: *Before . . .* *. . . and After LSD*

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skin of the normal user. The direct consequences of *LSD* intoxication are, after all, not the whole of the matter. To mention just one consideration, anyone who contemplates the tremendous explosion of colour (called not without good reason "psychedelic") that is observable in all fields of art and near-art will agree that the question cannot, unfortunately, be dismissed with a simple positive or negative answer.

Petra Kipphoff

"The Lonely Crowd," 20 Years After

By David Riesman

AT THE TIME *The Lonely Crowd* and *Faces in the Crowd* were published, we had no expectation that these books would be widely read outside the relevant academic fields. *The Lonely Crowd* was greeted in professional journals with often quite astringent criticism, and it made its way only slowly to a wider, non-professional audience. These non-professional readers need to be reminded that few scholars of even moderate sanity would sit down today to write a comprehensive, empirically oriented work like *The Lonely Crowd*. Studies of such scope are understandably out of style. Indeed, in some of the fields of scholarship on which *The Lonely Crowd* draws, including aspects of American history, probably as much specialised work has been published in the last twenty years as in all the preceding years.

When in 1960 the Yale University Press planned a new paperback edition of the book, I took the occasion to write a new preface to outline what seemed to me some of the main errors of the book, both as these might have been better appreciated at the time of writing and as they appeared in the glare of hindsight.[1] And now, almost a decade later, I have re-read *The Lonely Crowd* in preparation for a new printing. While making no changes of substance, so that any criticisms of the original edition a reader might come across would still apply, I found myself on many pages writing marginal notes indicating that a statement now struck me as dubious, or extreme, or plainly mistaken.

This would not trouble me much, since knowledge proceeds by successive approximations and even by speculations which turn out to be wrong, if it were not for the fact that *The Lonely Crowd* has in some measure entered the picture many Americans—and some readers in other countries—have of ourselves, both past and present. In however small a degree, the book has contributed to the climate of criticism of our society and helped create or reaffirm a nihilistic outlook among a great many people who lay claim to moral or intellectual non-conformity, or who simply want to be "with it" in order to escape being considered geriatric cases. Since the preface of 1960 was written, the moral temper of well-educated young Americans has greatly altered, and so has the context of our common life; also my own thinking has continued to evolve; and thus I feel that some further cautionary remarks are in order.

OBVIOUSLY, THE PROBLEMS that preoccupy attentive Americans are different now from those preoccupying people when *The Lonely Crowd*

SOON AFTER The Lonely Crowd *was published in 1950, it became a best-seller and one of the most influential sociological studies of contemporary American life. In his self-critical remarks two decades later, Professor David Riesman calls frank attention to the book's errors of argument and emphasis in the light of the current American mood. Yale University Press will shortly be publishing a new edition of* The Lonely Crowd.

[1] Concurrently, Seymour Martin Lipset and Leo Lowenthal edited a book of criticisms of *The Lonely Crowd* and *Faces in the Crowd*, to which my collaborators and I were invited to submit a chapter of reconsiderations. Their collection, *Culture and Social Character: The Work of David Riesman Reviewed* (The Free Press, 1961), remains in our judgment the best source for the analysis both of the contributions and the limitations of our work. My contribution to the volume was written in collaboration with Nathan Glazer.

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was written. Among the reflective, an atmosphere of what seems to me extravagant self-criticism has succeeded an earlier tendency toward glib self-satisfaction. In my opinion American society is not basically more evil and brutal than heretofore. In spite of war and preparation for war, and in the face of heightening racial tension, the lessening of bigotries described in *The Lonely Crowd* has continued; improved education and more liberal mass media have had an impact on traditional xenophobia. The fact that progressive measures, men, and attitudes have not brought peace at home or abroad keeps Americans polarised between our generous impulses and our fears.

Critics on the Right and Left have persuaded themselves that liberalism and progressive measures have dominated American society; this is a vast overstatement, ignoring that America has been dominated historically by unideological conservatism, with liberalism in the sense of contemporary welfarism and tolerance as a periodically influential minority tradition. Yet, because it has been believed that liberalism has been dominant, the sense of profound malaise so many Americans have about our society rests on the conviction that liberal measures have in fact been tried and have failed to dent our nearly insuperable problems. But that malaise also reflects our heightened expectations as to the society we should be and the contribution we should be making to the world. The beliefs we have about ourselves are also facts; they help shape our reality (this is the meaning of self-fulfilling prophecy about which Robert K. Merton and others have written). Measured despair of our society, expressed publicly, can serve to warn us against catastrophe and arouse us from somnolence. Extravagant despair, however, can lead some to withdraw from political and cultural action while others feel justified in acts of destructiveness and fail to grasp the potentials of non-violent change that do exist.

The Lonely Crowd has been read by many as arguing that Americans of an earlier day were freer and of more upstanding human quality. Developing a typology between "inner-directed" and "other-directed," we focused on changes that most readers seem to have regarded as changes for the worse. But others have read the book as too benign in diagnosing our time. While we viewed both the American past and present with irony and ambivalence, readers tended to identify with the weaknesses they felt in themselves or in the people they knew; and they could regard the cruelties and insensitivities of earlier Americans with the sympathetic detachment we reserve for evils which no longer threaten to overwhelm us.

The Lonely Crowd certainly contributed to these misreadings. For example, the chapters on Politics fall at times into a nostalgia the book generally eschews. Thus it was an overstatement to say that cynicism toward politics as a whole was virtually unknown in the 19th century, and no less wrong to declare that the defined political problems of that epoch "were thought to be manageable."[2] Similarly, although it seems to me that the book's portrait of the 19th-century moraliser is as unflattering as that of the contemporary "inside dopester," the self-mockery to which contemporary readers are prone led many to assume that the latter was an invention of our own decadent era.

Several contributions to the Lipset-Lowenthal anthology contend that the ethic of egalitarianism and achievement has been characteristically American since the very beginning of the republic and that American character has not changed fundamentally.[3] In my opinion, whether one emphasises continuity or discontinuity should depend on what one is interested in, as well as on one's assessment of conflicting evidence. Of course there is a great deal of continuity; but I think that the upper-middle-class affluent American described in *The Lonely Crowd* and in *Faces in the Crowd* differed from his ancestors in the quality of his relations to others. Not that Americans today are more conformist—that has always been a profound misinterpretation. And it is not that today's Americans are peculiar in wanting to impress others or be liked by them; people generally did and do. The difference lies in a greater resonance with others, a heightened selfconsciousness about relations to people, and a widening of the circle of people with whom one wants to feel in touch. As the representatives of adult authority and of the older generation decline in legitimacy, young people and the millions who seek to stay young become even more exposed to the power of their contemporaries both in person and through the mass media. That focus of attention often leads to resistance and non-compliance, but the point at issue is primarily the degree of resonance, and not so much of conformity.

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[2] See, for example, Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (1965) and Joseph Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade* (1964), especially Chapter 7.

[3] See Seymour Martin Lipset, "A Changing American Character?"; also his *The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (1963); also Talcott Parsons and Winston White, "The Link between Character and Society," in Lipset and Lowenthal, eds., *Culture and Social Character*.

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SINCE 1950 THE DECLINE in the weight and authority of adults chronicled in *The Lonely Crowd* has proceeded even further. Now attending high school and college are the children of the self-mistrustful parents who felt themselves revealed in books like *The Lonely Crowd*. The loss of inner confidence among adults is a worldwide phenomenon, reflecting rapid change in technology and values. Margaret Mead has spoken of native-born American parents feeling like immigrants in the country of the young. The young react to the loss of adult legitimacy with even greater self-mistrust, confusion, and rebellion. There are differences of degree, of course, so that while students from Tokyo to Prague take sustenance from each other's protests and learn from each other's tactics, the generational conflict is not everywhere the same. Indeed, the American student movements seem to me in some respects unique. South Africa may face a racial crisis in the future comparable to that of the United States, but the moral and intellectual priority this crisis now compels among sensitive whites as well as blacks is peculiarly American. The civil rights activities of earlier years provided the moral catalyst and much of the tactical experience later shifted to protests against the war and against colleges and universities. While students elsewhere protest against the war in Viet Nam, not even in Japan are they as directly engaged as are American young men who are compelled by the Draft to face ambiguous and intransigent moral quandaries.

A heightened sensitivity to such quandaries reflects among other things a shift since *The Lonely Crowd* was written toward a greater concern with autonomy and a rejection of adjustment as immoral compromise. There is also in our high and popular culture preference for anomie over adjustment, and a greater awareness of the anomie that does exist. This universal dimension of character remains significant even at a time when a putative shift from inner-direction to other-direction might no longer be the best scheme for delineating the social character of upper-middle class Americans. Many young people presently appear to be impulse-directed or circumstance-directed far beyond what was true in the same social strata several decades earlier. Yet since no country—not even the United States—changes all at once, much that was said about contemporary social character in *The Lonely Crowd* still seems to me relevant. But what is more important is to continue work on the problem of social character itself. Little empirical work exists concerning what distinguishes the social character of one era or stratum from that of another. If one is to separate social character from ideology or behaviour, the vignettes we published in *Faces in the Crowd* suggest the need to use projective material. We can only understand our society if we are able to analyse both how people behave and talk and what their more fundamental and often unconscious dispositions are like, and how these are shaped by history and in turn shape history.[4]

The Lonely Crowd was one of a number of studies that used the content-analysis of children's stories, movies, fiction and inspirational literature as a way of assessing the attitudes of readers and audiences. Such work is inferential, involving a judgment as to what an audience might have seen in a work—and if that audience is deceased and no longer available for interview, the most exquisite content analysis remains speculative. My colleague David McClelland has made this kind of analysis of fantasy material as a clue to attitudes of earlier times into a fine though risky art.[5] Comparative studies of the audiences for popular culture are infrequent, although the files of market researchers must contain data capable of historical analysis. Currently it would be interesting to have some studies of the "talk jockeys" who, in giving air space to the previously voiceless, sometimes spread and sometimes combat the contagious paranoia of the powerless.

Public opinion polling has continued to improve, and we are more amply provided with repeatable and reliable surveys concerning who thinks what about Race, the Bomb, the war in Viet Nam, human happiness, the popularity of leaders, and who is believd to "run America." Even so, as many have noted, our indicators for unemployment and gross national product and other economic indices are better than our indicators for intangibles such as satisfaction in love and work, or for the latent feelings that have not yet been mobilised by cultural or political evocation.

But the indicators we have offer only modest help in assessing the larger political and cultural questions raised by the continuing increase in

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[4] The concept of authoritarianism as developed in *The Authoritarian Personality* has perhaps been most fruitful in eliciting replication and re-analysis. But as many people have observed, the concept is unclear to begin with, lumping together a variety of traits found in a variety of social strata and historical settings. See, *e.g.*, Riesman, "Some Questions about the Study of American Character in the Twentieth Century," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Vol. 370, March 1967), pp. 36–47. I am indebted to Michael Maccoby for helpful discussion of this and related questions.

[5] See David McClelland, *The Achieving Society* (1961).

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the gross national product and concerning the uses we make of our relative abundance. *The Lonely Crowd* made the assumption, somewhat novel at the time, that the economic problem of abundance had been fully solved on the side of production, if not on the side of distribution. The 1960 Preface dealt with what I concluded was the mistaken notion that economic work was no longer important and that we can afford the post-industrial attitudes now so widely prevalent. A great many others have spoken prematurely in this same vein, including the economist Robert Theobald and the critic Paul Goodman. John Kenneth Galbraith has probably been the most influential social critic to insist that the United States does not need more production, more affluence, but rather more "public" goods, such as cleaner air, streets, and water, instead of more quickly obsolescent "private" goods.[6] Undeniably, the pursuit of production as an end in itself is pathological, although it is less socially dangerous than the pursuit of power as an end in itself.

Among the reasonably well-to-do, and especially among their children, American levels of consumption are often attacked as extravagant. Yet, given the political structure of the veto groups, it is hard for me to imagine how it will ever become politically possible to integrate the really poor inside America, let alone outside, without at the same time greatly raising the levels of living of lower (but not poor) socio-economic groups. That is, the still only insecurely affluent lower-middle and upper-working classes cannot be persuaded to be generous to the truly deprived, especially if these are black and obstreperous (even though the majority of the poor in America are white) if they themselves do not live on an ever-rising incline of consumer satisfaction. The poor, white and black, and their conscience-stricken affluent allies are minorities (and veto groups too, tactically effective in many local situations, with the power to create turbulence). But they are unable nationally to promote a juster distribution of rising resources. Indeed, tactical success is often gained at the expense of long-run strategic decline.[7] *The Lonely Crowd* did not take seriously enough the problem of con-

[6] See John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (1958). See also my essay, "Leisure and Work in Post-industrial Society," in Eric Larrabee and Rolf Meyersohn, *Mass Leisure* (1958), reprinted in Riesman, *Abundance for What? and Other Essays* (1964), pp. 162–83.

[7] See my article, "America Moves to the Right," *New York Times Magazine*, 27 October 1968.

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tinuing the expansion of resources to moderate the envies and resentments of the morally indignant not-quite-poor.

I HAVE BEEN a member of the "National Commission on America's Goals and Resources" of the National Planning Association, whose work suggests that in order to cope with the demands the American economy already makes on itself to deal with poverty in the ghetto and elsewhere, we need vastly expanded production, in addition, of course, to a shift away from spending on war and preparation for war. The Commission tried to cost the goals so far generally accepted as legitimate, such as the greatly increased health care, welfare, better housing, control over pollution, etc., that we seek. To achieve these, even if the war in Viet Nam were to be ended, would greatly exceed even our massive production in the foreseeable future—and without attention to the demands for aid among the developing countries.[8] Contrary to what I once thought, the economy is not self-propelling. We can see in Britain the problems that arise when a society becomes psychologically post-industrial long before the economic infra-structure is sound enough to bear the weight of steadily rising expectations. The most talented young Americans are continuing to avoid careers involved in any way with production and economic affairs, and they are also now avoiding careers in the physical sciences (other than medicine). These are regarded as lacking in "meaning."[9] Yet our increasingly sophisticated economy demands both more conscientious work and more free-wheeling imagination than it may get if young people's concept of management is one of a career for stooges, for "organisation men."

The Lonely Crowd contributed to the snobbish deprecation of business careers by underestimating the intellectual component of much work in complex organisations in its discussion of the shift from craft skill to manipulative skill. To move away from physical towards conceptual manipulation and away from working with things towards working with people should not have been seen as a deterioration. Large corporate business today depends much more on ideas and less on brute trial-and-error than was the case earlier. And *The Lonely Crowd* did point out the greater sensitivity and lower tolerance for exploitation in our corporate life. Yet, as always, such advances give rise to new problems. Our greater awareness of the fact that men are interdependent has led to a greater awareness of the manipulative relations that remain. In a larger population, the massiveness of the organisations in which men work and their greater distance from the end-product do give rise to feelings of unreality for many professional and white-collar employees. Abundance, although unevenly distributed, allows those who possess it to demand meaning in their work and to be dissatisfied with mere subsistence, and the relative lack of challenge that abundance produces makes it harder for many to find such meaning. In an earlier (and, in some respects, more innocent) day, Americans were often exploitative without realising it, or without caring one way or the other. They wanted results, and did not yet seek "meaning" as such.

A generation ago, Joseph Schumpeter talked about the withdrawal of affect from the entrepreneurial system. As children of the affluent renounce greed as a motive as well as traditional work-mindedness, they may find it hard to discover other more liberating sources of commitment. I see many young people today who expect to *fall* into a commitment or into an identity or into a meaning for their lives, the way romantic young people expect to fall in love. They are unwilling, often, to extend themselves in order to find themselves. With the continuing decline in the legitimacy of adult authority, the hegemony of the peer group has continued to increase. In terms of social character, this may involve some measure of "other-direction." But the others to whom one responds tend to be drawn from a narrow circle of intimates; hence there has not been an increase in other-direction in its aspect of openness to others. Tolerance and openness are extended only to small, marginally connected networks, whose norms include intolerance towards others outside the networks.

A SMALL MINORITY of this minority has thrown itself into politics, finding in the anti-War, Civil Rights, and anti-University movements a new secular religion and often a new family; for they are freer than heretofore of their parental families, their ethnic or religious backgrounds and local neighbourhoods.[10] It seems likely that

[8] See, for example, Leonard A. Lecht, *Manpower Needs for National Goals in the 1970's* (1969), a publication of the National Planning Association.

[9] For some, the rejection of the physical sciences reflects the fear that they are irrevocably linked with military domination. But the revolt against modernity extends to subjects like economics, and in some measure to any quantitative rational work.

[10] Cf. Kenneth Keniston, *The Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth* (1968); also Keniston, *The Uncommitted: Alienated Youth in American Society* (1965). Although, in one perspective, members of the (pro-Goldwater Republican) Young

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a varying proportion of this minority live with the awareness that nuclear weapons may destroy the human enterprise itself, reinforcing their profound anxiety and mistrust and their sense of historical discontinuity.[11]

I HAVE BEEN CONCERNED with the nuclear danger since Hiroshima and have given it first priority in my capacity as a citizen. People easily become obsessed with this danger (for example, deciding not to bring any children into so precarious and terrible a world), just as I have seen other people distracted from all else by their preoccupation with other social cruelties, injustices, and stupidities. *The Lonely Crowd* advocates the morally and practically difficult enterprise of living at once on two levels: that of ideals and even utopian visions, and that of day-to-day existence. Our daily life and our idealism must nourish and speak to each other. Against this, there has been a strong and at times fanatical tradition in America that the autonomous person must be a prophet and act on his convictions with minimal regard for personal and social consequence—a tradition at odds with the pragmatism which is also admired. The autonomous person too briefly delineated in the last chapter of *The Lonely Crowd* was someone with the ability and boldness to see straight, whether or not he had the courage or the power to act on his perceptions. Most of us are not heroes or saints, and if we insist that men must always act on their ideals, this may mean either that the ideals will be modified to suit the degree of one's courage and energy, or that individuals will become cynical about themselves or deluded about their society or both. Thus, this characteristically American belief that one must not only see straight but be sincere and act straight may at times give hegemony to the complacent, at other times to those capable of great moral outrage and dedication. My collaborators and I, both when we wrote *The Lonely Crowd* and still today, take a more benign and non-violent view of what is possible historically. We believe that the best hope for change in the direction of our ideals does not lie in efforts at total improvement in oneself and in society but in patient work towards incremental change in the light of a tentative sense of many possible futures.

Americans for Freedom seem tied to traditional backgrounds, their evangelical fervour is untraditional, just as Keniston's young radicals are sometimes carrying out parental mandates with an unparental evangelism.

[11] Cf. Robert Jay Lifton, *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* (1968).

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A Special Section

The Uses & Abuses of History

On Thinking about the Past

By Max Beloff

THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS that currently afflicts the historical profession is partly self-induced: a result of the real intellectual difficulties that confront the practising historian particularly in relation to recent history—and partly a reaction to the attacks made upon history by the followers of other and more fashionable disciplines or would-be disciplines. On the one side are the philosophers, questioning the very possibility of historical knowledge and raising important problems about subjectivity, the nature of causation, and so forth; on the other hand there are the sociologists and other social scientists who believe that the present can be directly apprehended, and that the past is only worth studying in relation to the present and through categories that arise from present preoccupations. Outside all intellectual groupings are the young nihilists who think that since the world can be remade tomorrow time spent on the past is time lost, and so-called practical men like that arch-philistine Mr. Edward Short who believes that there is something meaningful in the remark that it is more important to know about Viet Nam than about the Wars of the Roses.[1]

It is perhaps encouraging that historians are now prepared to pronounce about the purpose, validity, and methods of their own studies. They may do so in a common-sense—Johnson refuting Bishop Berkeley—style like Professor Geoffrey Elton.[2] Or they may show themselves adept at analysing the philosophers' own concepts and profiting by their insights.[3] There is, it would seem, a fair degree of agreement today, at any rate in the Western intellectual community, as to what are the benefits, limitations, and dangers of historical studies, what historians can reasonably claim about the status of historical knowledge, and to what extent the historical dimension is relevant to the world of practice. When the Master of Sidney Sussex College comes to write a little volume on "The Aims of History" for the undergraduate or the sixth-former, he can make statements to which most of the historical profession would give assent.[4]

One says "Western intellectual community" with some reservations; for even as between the principal nations that one includes, there are very considerable differences both in general attitudes towards historical studies and in the areas of current concentration in respect

MAX BELOFF *is the author of historical studies in half-a-dozen various fields: 17th-century England, constitutional history, the American Revolution, Soviet foreign policy, and the Age of European Imperialism. He is Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration at Oxford and a Fellow of All Souls.*

[1] Mr. Short's remark is quoted in the preface of Professor Charles Wilson's volume of essays, *Economic History and the Historian* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 50s.). The fact that someone with Mr. Short's intellectual limitations can hold the post of Secretary of State for Education and Science is deeply disquieting for those who care about either education or science; but that is another subject.

[2] G. R. Elton, *The Practice of History* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1967; London: Methuen).

[3] See, for instance, the thoughtful volume by Professor Gordon Leff, *History and Social Theory* (Merlin Press, 35s.).

[4] David Thomson, *The Aims of History* (Thames & Hudson, 18s.).

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of research—notably but not exclusively in contemporary history, where different kinds of material are available to a markedly different extent, and where different constraints exist of a moral or political kind.[5] But the differences between the West as a whole and the Soviet bloc are very much greater.

A minor but not insignificant reason for the difference where Soviet Russia itself is concerned is that history (apart perhaps from the books about the military exploits of the Russians in World War II) is not read for pleasure or general intellectual stimulation by the Soviet reading public but is left severely to professionals of the subject. In the West, on the other hand, the writings of professional historians for each other must be taken alongside the volumes they write for a wider public; and this literature in turn merges into the output of writers who would not claim to be professionals themselves and are content to be *vulgarisateurs* at different levels of accomplishment.

IT IS TRUE THAT there are those who would draw a rather sharp line between modern "scientific" professional history and anything else, particularly anything that claims attention primarily on literary merit. Professor Elton goes so far as to dismiss such earlier historians as Clarendon, Gibbon, and Macaulay as having written "in the prehistoric age" and thus having lacked the opportunities which "we markedly lesser men enjoy." But whatever distinctions may be drawn, the fact that history is still read for other purposes than professional ones and that an important historical work is still adjudged partly by the canons of art, cannot but influence the whole tone of historical writing.[6] In Britain this may partly be because of the continued vogue of political biography which Professor Elton does not accept as a branch of history, which is indeed quite frequently written by non-historians but which historians cannot, of course, afford to neglect.[7]

More important is the fact that Western historians profess (even if they do not always live up to it) a belief in the autonomy of history, that is to say in the proper freedom of historical inquiry from any subservience to a particular national or party objective:

> the autonomy of historical investigation—that is its pursuit and achievement for the sake of the truth alone and not in order to serve or support or defend any system of thought or of politics—is indispensable for its vitality (David Thomson).

Those responsible for guiding intellectual life in the Soviet Union must of course take the very opposite view: "a historian is not a dispassionate reporter who identifies facts or even places them in a scientifically valid pattern.... He is a fighter who sees his goal as placing the past at the service of the struggle for communism." His purpose is to promote "a firm conviction of the inevitability of the triumph of communism."[8] What this meant in terms of suppression and distortion of facts in the Stalinist period is well enough known. Writing early in 1966 it was possible to argue that Soviet historians were better than their principles should have allowed them to be and that much good work was being done even on relatively modern periods; though it is a little chilling to be told that in the history of agricultural collectivisation which is now an important area of concentration, "the hardships suffered by the population are not prominent among the topics of research...." And even an author who takes what he regards as an optimistic view about the capacity of Soviet historians to free themselves from the subservience to immediate political imperatives cannot but note that the more recent revision of Russian economic history seems to have been undertaken so as to show the similarities between Russia on the eve of revolution and the current conditions in underdeveloped countries with the implication that Russian experience is the most "relevant and instructive for contemporary developing countries."

ONE REASON FOR THE greater sophistication of Soviet historians today is to be found in their obviously greater acquaintance with trends of historical and philosophical inquiry in the West. And this is presumably a partial justification for the refusal of the Western historical community to regard their distance from the Soviet historians' ideological position as an impediment to collaboration on the scholarly plane. Soviet habits in this as in other fields do not make

[5] This fact came out very clearly in the symposium on the current state of writing in contemporary history held under the auspices of The Institute of Contemporary History and Wiener Library. The papers are published in D. C. Watt (ed.), *Contemporary History in Europe: Problems and Perspective* (Allen & Unwin, 60s.).

[6] The elevation of Dame Veronica Wedgwood to the Order of Merit—the first historian to be so honoured since the late G. M. Trevelyan—suggests that the traditional narrative historian is still (and, to my mind, rightly) given the first place in public esteem.

[7] One thinks, for instance, of the great biography of Joseph Chamberlain begun by J. L. Garvin and now triumphantly terminated by Mr. Julian Amery (Macmillan, £12).

[8] Academician B. N. Ponomarev quoted by Arthur P. Mendel in "The Current Theory of Soviet History: New Trends or Old," in the Watt volume, p. 263.

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cooperation easy. But the International Congress of the Historical Sciences has had the collaboration of the Russians for a good many years and the next big Congress under its auspices is scheduled for next year in Moscow itself. The British historians decided after the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia that they would not attend as a national group; though individuals may be present.[9] It is perhaps typical of the situation that Britain was the only Western country to take this line; elsewhere the argument seems to have been that this was a "political matter." The real question of the possibility of fruitful cooperation at a scholarly level with historians who have to accept as dogma the pronouncements of political authorities, and to work within the bounds of a single and constraining intellectual doctrine, with historians who cannot therefore accept the ultimate primacy of the brute fact, remains unexplored.

It should of course be of much greater professional interest to historians than the wickedness of the Soviet government which they argue to be none of their business; for the same problem confronts them in a different form in the shape of Western historians of the Marxist persuasion who while not under the same physical constraints as their Soviet colleagues, accept some of the same intellectual assumptions, though at different levels of sophistication.

THE MARXIST HISTORIANS do, of course, suffer from one obvious disadvantage, namely that they cannot be fully consistent. If they fully accept the Marxist sociology of knowledge then in a class-bound society—*i.e.*, in all societies that have so far existed—truth is out of reach. They cannot therefore claim for history the scientific status that Marxism itself postulates. There is the further difficulty (which Gordon Leff underlines) that the Marxist philosophy of history, resting as it does upon the distinction between the economic foundations and the "super-structure," places the motor of historical development in the changing modes of production and hence outside what is fully accessible to the historian.

Most Marxist historians tend to ignore the former dilemma but get impaled upon the horns of the latter. For they cannot always make the case on the basis of accessible and verifiable facts for the necessary belief that all aspects of an historical period are linked together by their relation to a class-struggle, itself the product of an economic system which must be postulated as uniform.

It is the attempt to fit the history of the 17th century in England into a mould which will make it appear that all its aspects from constitutional change and government to religious and scientific thought are conditioned by the rise of a new bourgeoisie that Professor Wilson uses as an example of what should be avoided when he deals with the Master of Balliol's *The Century of Revolution* in an essay entitled "Economics and Politics in the Seventeenth Century." Elsewhere he uses both British and Dutch history in order to show that to make full use of the insights given by economic history into the "mercantilist" period, it is necessary to accept the *autonomy* of technical developments, fiscal policy, and of politics itself as well as the so-called "historic interests" of particular classes and groups.

But the Marxist approach is not unique nor perhaps (since its difficulties and limitations are well-understood, and some of its practitioners in this country—Christopher Hill himself and Dr. Eric Hobsbawm, for example—are very considerable scholars) is it the most dangerous of alternatives to the traditional concentration on establishing the actual course of events. It is sociology and its impact upon historical writing that gives greater cause for worry. For the writing of history in terms of abstractions or "ideal types" may, as Professor Leff shows in the case of Max Weber and the "Protestant Ethic," lead to the historian committing the offence "of isolating from his material those elements" which support "his own constructs of ideal types."[10] In the hands of less eminent men than Weber, the history written and relied upon by sociologists ceases to have a direct relation with the lives and deeds and thoughts of actual men.

> It is sometimes [Professor Wilson writes] difficult to avoid the impression that the new sociology is but the old allegory writ large (though not necessarily more clear). The characters have changed. Fellowship, goods, knowledge, discretion, good deeds have gone: in their place is a new set of abstractions . . . collectivism, in-

[9] Mr. A. J. P. Taylor, who was to go as an individual member, announced in the *Sunday Express* (27 July 1969) that after the Brooke-Kroger exchange he no longer thought it safe to do so. It seems curious that it should have taken till the Brooke case for Mr. Taylor (who has had his clashes with Communist historians before) to discover that the rule of law is not a feature of the Soviet scene and that *habeas corpus* is not something to rely on in that part of the world. Or does the fact that Soviet history is not Mr. Taylor's special beat entitle him to disclaim what is common knowledge among non-historians?

[10] Reading Professor Wilson's book has made me aware for the first time of some strictures of his against a book I wrote thirty years ago under the influence of both the Marxist and the Weber-Tawney models of the 17th century. *Mea culpa.*

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dividualism, activistic socialism, commodity Hedonism, urbanisations, capitalism.

IT MAY BE ARGUED that this is only one aspect of the impact of sociology, and that there is another side to it, where what it gives is access to new series of concrete facts which in the end will help in the direct apprehension of the historical scene, in the manner of the *Annales* school in France. In the hands of a master of historical description like Fernand Braudel this technique can produce rich results.[11] But the idea that a multiplication of discrete facts and of statistics, collected by teams of individuals, can somehow be manipulated to give answers to problems that the mere historian cannot tackle seems an improbable one.[12] One has the feeling that this affection for statistics is not something that historians have developed for themselves out of the contemplation of their own subject-matter but an obeisance to what is thought to be the superior academic status of those subjects that have a mathematical aspect. Historians who can lay claim to numeracy aspire to the same reverence as used to be accorded to learned men who had mastered the ancient languages.

Professor Elton is right to remind us that the economic historian and demographer who must perforce rely on statistics must also be aware that before about 1800 many of the principal series that he requires cannot be regarded as more than speculative. But it is even more important to be aware of the trap that awaits those who seek for figures not where they are clearly important where they can be obtained (as in economic history and demography) but where they are given importance because they are obtainable.

In his essay in the Watt volume, "The 'New' Political History," Professor Allan J. Bogue sets out, admittedly in a rather less arrogant fashion than is common to "behavioural scientists," the claim made for the "behavioural approach" to the history of American politics. The difficulty here is that almost the only political material that lends itself to statistical treatment is material on elections; so that the "new" political history comes to be the history of party voting patterns. Of course this has its uses—largely negative ones (as when Professor

[11] Since I believe that a "Third Programme" broadcast of mine was the first assessment by a British historian of Professor Braudel's masterpiece on the Mediterranean world, I hope I shall not be thought prejudiced against the *Annales* school as such.

[12] Professor Elton (p. 27) has some good things to say about Mr. Keith Thomas' notorious article in the special history number of the *Times Literary Supplement* (7 April 1966).

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Lee Benson did some pioneering work in destroying some too easy stereotypes about Whigs and Democrats in the Jacksonian period). But political history is *not* the result of the behaviour of measurable aggregates but of active political leaders working on the masses as their raw material. The danger of the "behavioural approach" is that, as its technique becomes more refined, what it deals with becomes of more and more marginal interest—a sophisticated form of the mere "antiquarianism" which professional historians are always so anxious to disclaim. The "behavioural scientists" would appear to believe that "nothing is knowable that cannot be measured"; one is sometimes exasperated enough by them to think of replying, "nothing that can be measured is important enough to be worth knowing."

WHERE THE HISTORICAL PROCESS and the historian's understanding are concerned we seem, then, to be coming back to something like an agreement that the fundamental thing is the dialogue between the historian and his material leading to the establishment of narrative accounts within a time dimension of the major human experiences of the past. What mainly divides professional historians is the extent to which one can say "this was *because* of this," rather than just this came *after* this. Professor Leff can talk of the "tenuousness of the connections that the historian seeks to establish between events to make them intelligible," Professor Wilson of the "close texture of causation." Professor Elton would appear to think that these are matters for the philosopher and warns us against the easy way out of substituting "factors" for "causes." All would agree that the individual, though inaccessible without a knowledge of his environment, is an agent as well as a victim of the historical process.[13]

[13] Professor Elton defends what seems to me a quite unreal distinction between the public and private lives of public figures as subjects for historical study. It does not matter that Henry VIII was a bad husband; was he a good king? But how can one draw the line? At the moment of writing the United States seems largely preoccupied with the problem of whether the conduct of a leading senator in relation to a banal (if tragic) motoring accident is likely to rule out his candidacy for the President and what impact his removal from the next contest might have on American political parties, the race question, the struggle between the generations, and so forth. Perhaps the popular instinct that private life *does* matter is more reliable than the distinctions made in Cambridge cloisters. Those "prehistoric" historians, Clarendon, Gibbon, and Macaulay, would never have accepted Professor Elton's academic innocence in such matters.

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But the problems with which the historian is faced today do not end with those posed by the philosophers or the social scientists. If he knows *how* to study history, there remains the question of *what* history to study. The methods he uses (and this applies on both sides of the Iron Curtain) have been worked out in relation to the history of the Western world. Is this enough when some of those for whom he writes have to deal with problems in areas whose history has largely been separate from our own? "Historians in America," we are told, "have been like historians elsewhere, patriotic, genetically oriented and culture-bound...."[14] They must learn to get to grips with the problems of the history of other civilisations, even of those which are themselves not historically minded in our Western sense. That Professor Fairbank is right at some level of historical thinking is unquestionable; but this does not mean that the present vogue for courses in world history as being more "relevant" than the history of one's own country has much to recommend it.

Professor Fairbank is well aware of the difficulties—above all the linguistic difficulties that confront the would-be student. In the case of Russian history which was until very recently also somewhat on the periphery of our studies, the difficulty can to a considerable extent be met by translations of the basic texts. But for China this is obviously insufficient; no Chinese, no Chinese history!

But what makes one pessimistic is that even where language is no real impediment, the difficulties of getting to grips with the history of any foreign country are very considerable indeed, and perhaps becoming more so, particularly for Americans whose output of writing on so much of the world is becoming so vast that it is possible for the student to live a quite rich historical life without once venturing intellectually outside the United States.[15]

In Britain we still have those to whom this restriction does not apply. Sir Denis Brogan and Mr. Richard Cobb can sufficiently assimilate themselves to the French scene to take sides on local historical controversies (see "Accepting the Revolution" on another page of this number). And Sir Denis is, of course, equally at home in the minutiae of the American past. But most of us are not so happily placed. Dr. David Thomson, for instance, can use French examples of the points he makes with telling effect. But we then find him using as a good example of the beneficial impact of the economic approach upon traditional political and constitutional history, Charles Beard's *Economic Interpretation of the American Constitution* (1913) in seeming ignorance of the fact that subsequent researches have left very little standing of Beard's once impressive edifice. If a British historian can be unaware of the development of so important a theme in American history, what can he be expected to know of Russian, let alone Chinese history?

The danger here is that the "Whig" interpretation—the assessment of the past in terms of a progress to the presumably glorious and inevitable present—against which we are so careful to warn undergraduates in respect of British history can quite easily rear its head again in respect of foreign history. Because the Bolsheviks won the struggle for power in Russia, the history of 19th-century thought is studied in terms of looking for the precursors of Bolshevism and (as Leonard Schapiro emphasises in his article in this ENCOUNTER) many of its most interesting figures are neglected in consequence, and the course of Russian history distorted. In principle the historian must try to escape from the bias implicit in his own nurture; but he must learn to live with the fact that he cannot hope to escape very far.

HAVING IN MY TIME attempted American, French, and Russian history, I have had to face some criticism for an apparent retreat back to British history. Increasing awareness of the difficulties of an adequate degree of immersion in any history but one's own—for physical as well as intellectual reasons—is perhaps the best excuse I have to offer. But I would certainly argue that it is only within a framework with which one acquires such measure of intimacy that the really crucial questions can be asked. As Professor Leff writes of the historian:

> His account of the past is... shaped by what he knows to have resulted without sacrificing the conditions which helped to engender it. His starting-point is the very discrepancy—which Dilthey attempted to discard—between what men believed they were doing and what they did.

And this is not, as he says, a matter of reducing everything to ideology but the recognition of the fact that the historical agent lacks even

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[14] John K. Fairbank's "Assignment for the '70's," being the Presidential Address for 1968–9 to the American Historical Association. *American Historical Review* (February 1969), p. 867.

[15] A book by an American historian who has himself done important original work on Germany can cover the world-wide phenomenon of Nationalism and confine his footnote references almost exclusively to the American literature. Louis L. Snyder, *The New Nationalism* (Cornell University Press, 1968).

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the partial omniscience of the historian. The leaders of Britain during the period of the decline of Empire—my present subject—did not work for the decay of Empire into Commonwealth, or of Commonwealth into chaos; but what they did attempt is part of the story along with what happened. To try and find out how the real and imaginary interacted is the kind of thing which (whether successful or not) is the historian's most useful contribution to making the world intelligible; and this, after all, is his ultimate business.

Revolutionary Turning-Points

By Maurice Ashley

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY has seen a reassessment of the revolutionary epoch in British history that occurred 300 years ago. Since Gardiner and Firth wrote their political histories of England (completed by Godfrey Davies and David Ogg, and supplemented by the work of J. R. Tanner) the origins and course of the revolutions of 1640–1653 and of 1688–1689 have been subjected to close analysis and controversial argument. There is scarcely a British or American university where modern history is taught which does not support a pundit on 17th-century English history. The University of East Anglia, to give one example, has two professors who are each expert in this subject and divide their teaching at the year 1649. It seems almost incredible that anything should be left to be said or to be discovered and yet month by month the books still flood out—including even such an impressive list of dates as Neville Williams' *Chronology of the Expanding World*.[1]

What are the differences of emphasis and approach which colour the study of this subject today as compared with the period nearly a century ago when S. R. Gardiner began his pioneering research? Gardiner himself was a nonconformist and he was moved by Victorian religious conceptions and by Victorian liberalism; he was awarded a civil list pension by Mr. Gladstone for his devoted historical writing, and stuck closely to a chronological method of investigation. The result was (as Roland G. Usher showed) that Gardiner's ideas about the English nation, the English constitution, and even some of the characters in English history were often inconsistent. But, on the whole, he portrayed the revolution as a national outbreak against a king who had perverted the constitution and given his patronage to a High Church clergy trying to hold back the Puritan tides. The emphasis was, therefore, political and religious. To modern historians, however, the problem that has presented itself is why could not the differences between Charles I and his parliaments have been compromised? The King was willing to offer concessions, to sacrifice his ministers, to repudiate his own conduct, as, for example, in the levying of ship money, and to accept restraints upon his sovereignty. Professor Wilson H. Coates has spoken of the emergence of politics and economics as "independent disciplines" as well as of a scientific revolution and other factors combining to complicate the problem of determining human motivation in the 17th century. And certainly it has been an emphasis on the importance of economic and social factors which has been characteristic of much writing on this subject. Both Christopher Hill and Hugh Trevor-Roper, approaching the matter from rather different angles, have tended to minimise the significance of purely religious antagonisms and have looked at the revolution from the standpoint of social structure.

Another influence upon the study of 17th-century history in modern times has been that of the late Sir Lewis Namier. The parliaments of James I and Charles I have already been subjected to a minute analysis of the kind that he favoured and at present, under the direction of Professor Basil Henning, the membership of Charles II's parliaments is undergoing a similar sort of scrutiny. Thus it may be said that the structure of society and the character of parliaments have been examined in order to assess the causes of the bloody revolution of 1642 and the bloodless revolution of 1688; and

MAURICE ASHLEY *is the author of many works on 17th-century English history, including "Great Britain to 1688" (1961, Cresset) and "The Glorious Revolution of 1688" (1966, Hodder). His "The Golden Century" was published this year by Weidenfeld.*

[1] *Chronology of the Expanding World, 1492–1762.* By NEVILLE WILLIAMS. Barrie & Rockliff: The Cresset Press, 70s.

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this has tended to minimise the religious aspect and has permitted the drawing of parallels between the British events and the great upheavals of later times such as the French, Russian, and Chinese revolutions in which historians have detected primarily social causes. The emphasis has in fact moved away from constitutional and religious history towards economic and parliamentary history. New classes such as an "industrious" class and a "declining gentry" or "backwoodsmen" have been discerned hard at work in the 17th century undermining the earlier constitution of political society.

Mr. Stuart E. Prall in a perceptive introduction to a collection of documents or extracts from documents, just published[2] and defiantly called *The Puritan Revolution*, describes how to two "variations on the same theme" (provided by the late Professor Tawney and Hugh Trevor-Roper) Christopher Hill has added a more thoroughgoing Marxist touch. He writes:

> For Hill the Revolution was the point in English history when the new industrial and commercial capitalist bourgeoisie went to war to supplant the landed feudal interest. Hill's theme was developed during the 1930s and has proved to be very short-lived, being abandoned by its own author in the 1960s. In his recent survey of seventeenth-century English history Hill has gone back to the old theme of court *versus* country: a theme that Trevor-Roper was actually expounding under a different name, and that both Gardiner and Tanner had been developing in their own ways.

In a series of books Christopher Hill has stressed the secular side of the revolution from which the adjective Puritan has been carefully subtracted. In his *Economic Problems of the Church* (1956) he suggested some of the non-theological reasons which might lead men to oppose the Laudian régime in the English Church, and in his book *Society and Puritanism* (1964) he outlined in a highly ingenious way a number of reasons why the Church was unpopular with the Puritans quite apart from its theological or liturgical teachings. Finally, in a third book, *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (1965), Dr. Hill attributed to Francis Bacon, Walter Raleigh, and Edward Coke ideas of a largely secular character which contributed to the origins of the revolution though he admitted that he had been unable to discover either a Rousseau or a Marx. In his *Archbishop Laud* (2nd. edn., 1962) Professor Trevor-Roper attributed to his subject "an intellectual appeal

[2] *The Puritan Revolution. A Documentary History*. Edited by STUART E. PRALL. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £1 8s.

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which found no favour," and in more recent scattered writings the same author has argued that Oliver Cromwell was the instrument of class destruction rather than the advocate of Puritan reform.

One suspects that the time has now come for a reaction against this sociological approach to history (it found its *reductio ad absurdum* in Peter Laslett's *The World We Have Lost* which deals with subjects like the illegitimacy rate in Shropshire villages). Mr. A. A. Hillary of Abingdon school in a sensible book on *Oliver Cromwell and the Challenge to the Monarchy*[3] writes in a forthright way:

> One cannot really any longer accept Professor Tawney's view that the rebellion was the result of business pressure by a progressive capitalist gentry determined to increase its political power to match its new-found wealth. Nor does Professor Trevor-Roper's picture of a desperate and impoverished gentry striking out blindly against centralised government and court exploitation entirely fill the bill.

He argues instead that the revolt was engineered by a combination of a powerful section of the ruling classes in which many merchants, yeomen, and lesser people joined. (Mr. Hillary is an admirer of Oliver Cromwell's integrity. It is a pity he gets the date of Cromwell's birth wrong and does not explain why he has invented a new spelling for Cromwell's mother's maiden name.)

Mr. Stuart E. Prall in the introduction to his selection of well-chosen documents deals even more firmly with the new approach. While he says that he accepts the view that England in the mid-17th century experienced a "true revolution" he equally is reluctant to acknowledge the Tawney/Trevor-Roper preoccupation with the status of the gentry or the Christopher Hill touch which transmogrifies Puritanism into science and economics. The interesting thing is not why Parliament revolted against the absolutism of Charles I but why Charles I in 1641 was able to find a sufficiently large following in the gentry-filled House of Commons (as he did at the time of the debate on the Grand Remonstrance) to provoke a civil war. The truth is that no one has really refuted the conclusions of Brunton and Pennington's book on *Members of the Long Parliament* (1954) which shows there was virtually no difference between the composition of the two sides in the Commons, except that perhaps younger men favoured the royalist cause.

[3] *Oliver Cromwell and the Challenge to the Monarchy*. By A. A. Hillary. Pergamon Press, 25s, paper 16s.

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NOT ONLY HAVE sociologists extended their researches to 17th-century England but linguistic philosophers are embracing it in their fields of inquiry. Professor Gunn of Ontario has just published a highly abstruse work[4] in which he ploughs through the lush pastures of 17th-century political writing to discover the meaning of the phrase "public interest" or the common good and how that is to be reconciled with the private interests of the individual. As Professor Gunn admits, "interest was a conveniently vague term," and when historians write of interests they more frequently mean the interests of groups such as economic classes or religious parties. Mr. Gunn is not much concerned with these, although in his chapter on "Economic Argument: the Public Interest Quantified," he becomes much more realistic. He takes, for instance, the questions of enclosure and usury and discusses whether they were of public advantage or could be made to fit in with the private interest of individuals. Thomas Mun's famous dictum about distinguishing "between the gain of the kingdom and the profit of the merchant" is quoted and it is shown how Mun was disconcerted in having to admit that a merchant might make an unjust gain at the expense of the public.

Broadly, one gathers, there are two solutions to the problems of the relationship of public and private interests. Either it may be said that in an ideal state the public interest is the sum of private interests or it may be argued that the public interest comprises the defence of the country against foreign enemies and the defence of private property against those who trouble the public order, and these two considerations must invariably override individual interests. The first doctrine, though often preached by individualists, seems a nonsense. The second is realistic but opens the way to constant conflicts with the individual as over those who are conscientious objectors or communists who do not believe in private property. As Professor Gunn says, the public interest or the common good often has a pompous sound: he instances a notice put up in British railway dining cars to the effect that it is not in the public interest to bring dogs into the carriage. Most of the writers in the 17th century do not appear to have been taken in by claims made for the Leviathan state. But there were exceptions, including of course Hobbes himself who made it plain that "interest" inevitably moved all men in all they do and that conflicting private interests could not be reconciled without an overriding public interest. James Harrington met the point of conflict by accepting the fact that it was necessary to balance private interests against each other. But most writers were so absorbed in their own particular interests that they failed to see that conflicts could arise and that this was the reason of state that justified the power of governments.

WITH DR. VINCENT'S excellent book on the grammar schools from 1660–1714[5] we return to the main highway of traditional history. In a book published in 1950, which has now become a standard authority, Dr. Vincent threw a flood of light on to the state of English education between 1640 and 1660. His new book has a wider scope. We are reminded how the hundred years before 1660 constituted a golden age for English education when many charitable bequests enabled new schools to be established. It is suggested that four thousand schools were in existence at this time. But after 1660 there was a decline in the quality and importance of the schools. Why was this? The reason was partly political. The grammar schools had produced the rebels, men like Oliver Cromwell, John Milton, John Hampden and John Selden. Although some headmasters were changed after Charles II's restoration, the grammar schools came under suspicion as the seedbeds of revolution and it appears that the gentry and merchant classes ceased to be so lavish in their support as they had been in the past. Whatever the exact cause, schools became poverty-stricken and their decline stretched into the 18th century. One of the defects of the free grammar schools was that their curriculum was so narrow, covering mainly Latin and sometimes Greek and Hebrew but not extending to modern subjects. Many of the masters were clergymen. But they were poorly paid, the average salary for a headmaster being £30 a year and for an usher £15. This scarcely bears comparison with the wages of skilled workmen such as builders. Though the children went to these schools at the ages of seven or eight, the preparatory or "petty" schools had not necessarily by that time inculcated the three Rs and thus there was a sad gap in the system of teaching.

Dr. Vincent tells us something about the dissenting schools and academies which were set up after the Restoration, but to attain a complete picture of education at this time one needs to know more about them. It is possible that their achievement to some extent compensated for the accepted decline in the grammar schools

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[4] *Politics and the Public Interest in the Seventeenth Century*. By J. A. W. GUNN. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £3.

[5] *The Grammar Schools. Their Continuing Tradition, 1660–1714*. By W. A. L. VINCENT. John Murray, 70s.

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and private schools and may modify the verdict of Professor Lawrence Stone that "there was a prolonged educational depression which began in the second half of the 17th century and lasted for over a hundred years." But we have reason to be grateful for the task now completed by Dr. Vincent, a solid piece of historical research and writing that is revealing in many different ways of how life was lived in England three hundred years ago.

THERE WERE two revolutions in the 17th century but few historians have tried to trace the precise connection between them. On the whole, the modern view seems to be to say that while the upheaval in the middle of the century was a social one and formed part of a general crisis which hit the whole of Europe, the revolution of 1688 consisted of the mere substitution of one king for another and scarcely deserves the title of a revolution at all. When the reviewer was at Oxford forty years ago the subject set for the Stanhope essay prize was "the republican movement in the reign of Charles II." One is inclined today to think that this movement was more important than used to be imagined. In a book entitled *John Wildman: Plotter and Postmaster* (1947) I tried to trace how this mysterious and saturnine figure, who had been John Lilburne's first lieutenant in the hey-day of the Leveller movement, had been mixed up in nearly all the republican plots stretching from those that took place during the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell to those that were adumbrated in the first days of William III's reign. It is hardly doubtful that the Whig leader, the Earl of Shaftesbury—had he lived longer and recognised the feebleness of his candidate for the throne, the Duke of Monmouth—would have become a republican, while William III himself was to be extremely nervous about the possibilities of a successful republican movement interfering with his own ascent to the British throne.

In her new book entitled *Two English Republican Tracts*[6] Professor Caroline Robbins shows how two British authors, Henry Neville and Walter Moyle, spanned "the century in which republicanism of the kind proposed by English Commonwealthmen ran its course." Walter Moyle wrote his books at the beginning of the 18th century and the essay on the *Constitution and Government of the Roman State* (not published until 1796) which Professor Robbins reproduces, affords a rather obscure light on the republican movement. It might have been more valuable if she had reprinted Algernon Sidney's *Discourses* which, like Neville's *Plato Redivivus* (which she does reproduce) was written at the time of the exclusionist movement, a movement which we now know (thanks to Peter Laslett's researches) also inspired the political writings of John Locke. Undoubtedly the late 1670s and early 1680s were a fecund period in the history of English republicanism which can no doubt be traced onwards through Moyle and Tom Paine to the reaction against Queen Victoria's forbidding widowhood. A republican movement in fact has never been far below the surface in modern England (it is still there today, as witness some of the comment on Prince Charles' recent investiture). But the republican thinkers of the 17th century, from James Harrington to John Wildman, were all high-flown intellectuals, and it seems probable that they would have been content with a written constitution providing for a limited monarchy such as some historians see in an inchoate form in the days of Thomas Cromwell and even the early years of Charles II.

Mr. John Carswell in his learned book *The Descent on England* is concerned with the revolution of 1688 but chiefly in relation to its

[6] *Two English Republican Tracts*. Edited by CAROLINE ROBBINS. Cambridge, £3.

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European background[1] and makes little of the republican rumblings. We are left with the impression on reading this book that William was determined from an early stage to overthrow his father-in-law, King James II, in order that England should be made to play a big part in the prolonged struggle against the overweening ambitions of Louis XIV of France. The author's concentration on the preparations for the invasion of England (involving, as they did, the raising of no fewer than three armies by William) seems to me to put the revolution a little out of focus. In tune with the modern trend Mr. Carswell writes that "the Revolution was a far-reaching event, even though it was not a social upheaval of the kind the word 'revolution' describes today." But the point was that William could scarcely have carried out his invasion without bloodshed if the mass of the English people had not mistrusted James II and had not been warmed by that strangely virulent anti-papal feeling that can be traced back to the time of the Tudors. My own view, as suggested in my book on *The Glorious Revolution of 1688* (1966), is that this revolution cannot be properly understood without harking back to the exclusionist movement of ten years earlier. Charles II was then prepared to constitute a regency and William III waited agog to see if he would be made the regent. Steady majorities in the House of Commons were then voting to prevent James as an avowed Roman Catholic from ever succeeding to the throne. After a Tory reaction James was given his chance to prove himself a moderate king, but he failed to grasp it. Thus the same sort of classes combined in a *national* movement to overthrow James II as had combined to overthrow his father.

Thus it may be argued that the revolutionary movement in 17th-century England was all of a piece, that it was, as far as such a phenomenon may be fairly described, a national movement against absolutism and against Roman Catholicism whose origins may be detected in the last years of Queen Elizabeth I's reign. The aristocracy may have passed through a "crisis" (as Professor Stone avers), and the gentry may have "risen" or "fallen" or both, but in any case there was an articulate body of society in England which was not prepared to stomach the kind of absolute government that prevailed in France, Sweden, and elsewhere in Europe. That is what, it seems to me, makes 17th-century England and her revolutions unique.

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[1] *The Descent on England.* By JOHN CARSWELL. Barrie & Rockliff: The Cresset Press, 50s.

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Accepting the Revolution

By D. W. Brogan

"THAT SWEET ENEMY, France" is a quotation from one of the works of another product of Shrewsbury School, Sir Philip Sidney, which Mr. Richard Cobb exemplifies in this very remarkable series of essays on French historical topics.[1] His title is revealing, and revealing of a very important fact about Mr. Cobb. The "second identity" he has acquired is that of being almost a Frenchman; almost rising to the rank of a *métèque*. He rejoices in the accident which saved him from settling in as a German student when he went down from Oxford; and, with all the necessary reservations, irritations, and misunderstandings that are provoked by a refugee from the "Anglo-Saxon" world, he tries to study France not quite as a Frenchman but, what is perhaps more difficult, in French terms. He fully realises that France is not really under a continual examination for moral and intellectual probity by an English "jury," and he does not necessarily feel called on to give marks of good or bad behaviour in the manner of so many real or pseudo historians of France.

The fact that he escaped from the rather clammy embraces of Vienna is important. Perhaps he would not go as far as Bismarck who once described a Bavarian as "something between an Austrian and a human being"; but his dislike of *Gemütlichkeit* is a very healthy symptom. Indeed, now I come to reflect on it, a number of my friends who had to make a choice between settling for France or Germany in the period *entre deux guerres* had reason then and later to be grateful that they chose France, for it seems—I am possibly unjust—that the people who chose Germany or Austria got the worst of both worlds. They sank into a kind of political and historical *Schwärmerei*, and some have not yet cleansed their bosoms of the perilous stuff. It would be unkind to name names, but I *could* name quite a lot of people who never recovered from their adventures, erotic and otherwise, in the days of the Weimar Republic.

It must be noted for a beginning that Mr. Cobb is not one of our neutral, drab, scientific historians. He has none of the English talent that Newman described (I am quoting from memory), that of steering between the Charybdis of yes and the Scylla of no. He is a man of the Left. His natural sympathies go out, not indeed to all of the Left, but to a great deal of it, as a kind of Pavlovian reflex. I have two sympathies in France, and they are mostly with the Left, but I think I am not as easily excited to indignation by the iniquities of the Right as Mr. Cobb was and, to some extent, still is. For without going as far as the late Gilbert Murray who said in his old age that he had decided the Left is even sillier than the Right (he was talking about England), I think there is a great deal to be said against both sides. Thus, I do not feel indignation in thinking of Monsieur de Charette *chassant les perdrix*, nor would I have objected to joining in singing *Vive Henri IV* if I had ever heard it sung anywhere in France, even in the most *bien-pensant* circles. (I have always thought that a book on French politics by a rather silly Englishwoman who translated *les bien-pensants* as "people who thought a lot" explains a great deal in the non-comprehension of the two close neighbours.)

Nearly all of Mr. Cobb's essays here are devoted either to specific points of historical research in the history of the Revolution or to discussions of the historiography of the Revolution. There is, perhaps, not enough about the historiography of the Revolution in the immediate post-Revolutionary years although there is a very just and consequently flattering essay on a remarkable study of the "Prefects of the Restoration," carried out in brilliant form by Dr. Nicholas Richardson.

BUT IT IS THE PASSION of the Revolution itself that Mr. Cobb deals with. He is not naïve about this. In a famous exchange between Clemen-

SIR DENIS BROGAN was, until recently, Professor of Political Science at Cambridge. He is the author of many works on American history, and his book on "The Development of Modern France" was recently re-issued by Hamish Hamilton.

[1] *A Second Identity: Essays on France and French History*. By RICHARD COBB. Oxford University Press, 55s.

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ceau and a *rallié* who had said, "I accept the Republic," Clemenceau retorted, "But do you accept the Revolution?" Mr. Cobb decidedly accepts the Revolution. But this does not mean that he accepts the Revolutionary historians *en bloc* for he knows more than Clemenceau did and knows that the Revolution was not a *bloc* as Clemenceau once asserted. He was early shocked, and has remained shocked, at the passion of the French for blood and blood-letting, and for their readiness to excuse what may well seem inexcusable. It is not a case of being a professional moralist of a rather unpleasant type, as was the first Lord Acton. But Mr. Cobb does not accept the implication of the famous question put by Barnarve, "And was this blood so pure?" We have seen too much of the doctrine of the *sang impur* in quite recent years to be *barnarviste*. Mr. Cobb has recently joined Miss Betty Behrens in resisting the sophistries of that vicarious revolutionary, Professor Albert Soboul. On the other hand, it might be noted that in the days of May 1968, although there was a great deal of talk about blood, there was very little blood. By American standards, almost any week-end is a great deal bloodier than the five weeks of the abortive '68 revolution. But as Mr. Cobb points out, the French throw around words like *assassin* when they don't mean very much by it: it would be a useful addition to French if it had some equivalent of the Irish exact phrase, "He was killed dead."

Nor is Mr. Cobb a Marxist (neither, after all, or so he said, was Marx). But I don't think he is quite sceptical enough about the Marxism of a great many eminent French alleged Marxists. I have never been able to take the Marxism of that great man Jean Jaurès seriously: can one conceive a less Marxist book than his famous Latin thesis on the origins of German Socialism? Nor do I think his *Histoire Socialiste* is a very Marxist work. Nevertheless, Mr. Cobb gained a great deal by the years he spent in Communist company. Even if he got a dose, as they say, he recovered from it with only slight twinges in his ideological framework reminding him—and us—of the illusions of the 1930s.

FOR ONE THING, Mr. Cobb insists on the personality of history, or on the fact that history is very largely about personalities. It is not that he is a hero worshipper or a hero denigrator. There is no Carlylean nonsense here. (I hope I am right in suspecting that Mr. Cobb detests that odious Scot as much as I do.) Nevertheless, he dislikes, as I do, the French habit of being in the medieval sense of the term, "realists." So we have categories like *le peuple*; *la Gauche*; *la réaction* and, although it is now

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going out of date, *le suffrage universel*. Just as some Nazi leader or other said that whenever he heard the word culture used, he wanted to draw his revolver, I feel much the same when I hear Frenchmen say, "You cannot understand our Cartesian way of looking at things...." I don't know that many Frenchmen know very much about Descartes, and I once remember warning a French official who was going to carry out negotiations in London with a British official that his opposite number knew a great deal more about Descartes than he did. But it is often difficult to persuade Frenchmen that any foreigner knows anything better than they do. On the other hand, I think Mr. Cobb is absurdly pessimistic about the knowledge of foreign tongues among the French professor class.

It is perhaps because he has dealt mainly with French historians of France that he thinks the great Georges Lefebvre[2] was almost unique in his knowledge of English and German. This is quite untrue. But Georges Lefebvre was a formidable man and one of the things he insisted on might perhaps be a little more in Mr. Cobb's mind. Lefebvre had the habit of saying, "You must know how to count," and you must! Mr. Cobb is too open to *passer outre* when faced with questions in which some counting is an aid to solution—or a guarantee against a kind of error. For example, looking back on the '30s of the *Front Populaire*, Mr. Cobb comments on how youthful France felt at that time. I have a basic objection to this statement. While Mr. Cobb was in Paris or in various archival depositories, I was living in a village of which I am a citizen. It was a village visibly dying under my eyes. I don't see how a country can be called youthful if in fact its population is ageing, and ageing very alarmingly, and one of the oddest aspects of recent English discussions of France has been a failure to notice that we are seeing for the first time for over a century, the emergence of a France that is really young because quite soon a majority of the French population will be young people.

A minor point: when Mr. Cobb talks of the *fileuses* of the First Republic, I just wonder how many there were? For at this time there was not a single steam-driven piece of cotton machinery in France. The first appears in Alsace in 1812, and in fact cotton was a minor industry even in England, as it had to be before Mr. Eli Whitney, one of Mr. Cobb's detested Yankees, had invented the cotton gin in 1795.

[2] His study of Napoleon has recently been published in English translation by Routledge & Kegan Paul: Vol. I, *From 18 Brumaire to Tilsit*, 1799–1807, 35s. Vol. II, *From Tilsit to Waterloo*, 1807–1815, 45s.

THERE IS NO DOUBT that Mr. Cobb thinks that, with all the necessary qualifications imposed on our sad human condition, the French Revolution was, to quote from *1066*, "a good thing." He obviously thinks that thinking too much about the Revolution or applying optimistically the alleged lessons of the great Revolution to the situation in France today could have its dangers. Indeed it could. For one can either take the view, as so many Frenchmen do, following Taine, that France took a wrong turning in 1789 and is still going down the wrong street; or that the Revolution was over with the establishment of the Third, Fourth, or Fifth Republic; or that the Revolution is still going on. The mere survival of words like *convention* in the recent desperate efforts of the French Left to become something other than a vague body of competing ambitions and confused traditions is itself one of the prices of Revolution—and I have myself written a book trying to show that revolutions have a very high price.

But it is one of the very many great merits of Cobb's book that it makes us see what France is like, and that the achievements of France, great as they are, have taken this post-revolutionary form and it is too late to lament about it. Then questions of revolutionary history in France are part of politics as they are in other countries like the United States. Nobody in England, outside the academic world, gives a damn for the questions that arise from the rise and fall of the gentry. Outside Ireland, religious history in the true sense, *i.e.* an affair of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness, is less and less in demand. But in France these issues were, until recently, still part of French politics and, in a sense, of French life. Mr. Cobb brings this home to our bosoms by his brilliant and amazing amount of work in provincial archives, by his account of the oddities of archivists (which recall to me some of the oddities of Senators and Congressmen) and his understanding of the preference of the product of the École des Chartes for pre-Revolution subjects.

There is one reason for this preference which Mr. Cobb does not discuss, though I think it is impossible to believe he does not know of it. An archivist has in his hands an immense amount of family material which may not only show up great scandals in the past but may also show great pretentions about the past. I know one archivist who, in addition to passing first out of the École des Chartes, is a doctor of medicine and a country gentleman, and he was quite startled to receive a *faire part* for a wedding from a nobleman of whom he had never heard. Making discreet enquiries, he discovered it was one of the clerks in his own office who had ennobled himself. It is one of the

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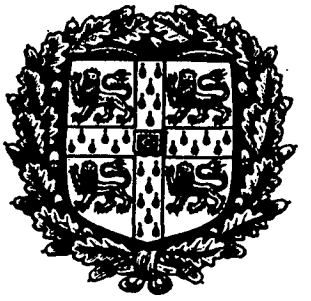

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Finally, Cambridge have recently reissued in cloth (30s. net) and put into paperback (12s. net) Herbert Butterfield's **Man on His Past: The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship.** On its original publication in 1955, *The Listener* commented, 'The way Professor Butterfield blows the gaff on the technical historian's pretensions will delight the wider public and disconcert (one hopes) the historical pundit.'

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pleasures of this *érudit* to report on the alleged noble pretensions of various eminently bourgeois and indeed, in origin, Jacobin families. (I regret to say that I cannot share Mr. Cobb's admiration for that monster of vanity Joseph Callilaux whose most characteristic speech was one addressed to a group of, as he no doubt thought, admiring workers, pointing out that he was doing them a good turn by speaking to them—"*moi qui suis presque noble.*" And if Mr. Cobb were dealing with very modern France, he might note the revival in political influence of some genuinely noble families like *Les Broglie* as well as the arrival of some very new noble families including some interesting members of HSP (*Haute Société Protestante*).

It is, perhaps, a sign of certain remaining "Anglo-Saxon" prejudices that Mr. Cobb seems to me to have an unlimited and, I think, excessive admiration for the French Protestants, but he does not distinguish nearly enough between the members of the "Pretended Reformed Church," to translate baldly, and the Alsatian Lutherans. I prefer the Alsatian Lutherans, including Monsieur Pierre-Paul Schweitzer, the tyrant of the International Monetary Fund, who has also the distinction of being a first cousin of Monsieur Jean-Paul Sartre. Thus, Mr. Cobb rashly asserts that there were no Vichyssois among the French Protestants. He must know French Protestants who are very unlike those I know, because, being on the whole prosperous, stable, and possibly alarmed people, a great many of them were more devoted to the Marshal, practically and emotionally, than many Catholics; and when we are told, as by Mr. Cobb, of the edifying virtues shown by some Protestant *pasteurs* protesting against the abominations of French rule in Algeria, he might have mentioned a much more important and relevantly courageous critic, the Archbishop of Algiers. He might even have mentioned the pioneering work carried out, not by *Le Monde* but by *La Croix*, in exposing the atrocities of French repression. And Mr. Cobb could ponder the careers of Monsieur Gaston Doumergue, General Nivelle, and Monsieur Guy Mollet. (It was to some extent Nivelle's partly English origin, the fact that he was bilingual, and a Protestant that commended him in 1916 to Lloyd George, with disastrous results for everybody.)

IT IS, I THINK, a good sign that Mr. Cobb's book has excited me a great deal, almost always to approval, sometimes to feeling, "How can somebody who knows so much not know that?" or alternatively, "How can somebody who knows so much believe that?" I am ready to believe that Mr. Cobb could reverse the charges against me. But there is, all through this book, visible Mr. Cobb's prodigious erudition —exemplied in the fact that his greatest work in bulk and merit, *Les Armées Révolutionnaires* (2 vols., 1961–63), was written in French and published at The Hague. This indeed is a long way from the rather innocent or ignorant or malicious English commentators on what Tennyson called "the red-fool fury of the Seine." Since our relations with France are likely to be extremely important even in the absence, permanent or temporary, of the General, a book like this which is almost French but gains a great deal from not being quite French is of the greatest scholarly but also of very great practical interest. For alas for so many people the English reporting of the events of last year showed "the further off from England the nearer is to France."

There is one very representative aspect of Mr. Cobb's reporting on the French intellectual climate as he has known it so well, in Paris as well as in provincial archives. He is a stout anti-American. There is no evidence that he knows anything about America, but this in France is no handicap for writing articles or even books on America. Did not Madame de Beauvoir get the *prix Goncourt* for writing a *roman à clef* called *Les Mandarins*, of which the hero (who restored the heroine's belief in sex) was called Brogan? I was told later that Madame de Beauvoir believed that Brogan was a Finnish name. To give one example of Mr. Cobb's inadequate preparation for being a competent anti-American, he misses the point when he discusses his indignation and that of Sartre and others about the execution of the Rosenbergs. I was—indeed, am—even more indignant about this than Messieurs Sartre and Cobb. But the reason for my indignation was that I knew how harmless and trivial was their very petty treason, and how malignant their persecution by the Eisenhower administration. After all, Mr. Cobb does not seem to have reflected at all on the fact that his belief and the belief of Sartre and others that America was planning a pre-emptive war against the Soviet Union has turned out to be a standard French *canard*.

It could, of course, be held that it was fear of alienating Jean-Paul Sartre even further that tied the hands of the Pentagon. But Mr. Cobb does not have *two* second identities as, at a much lower level, I have. And then when he rebukes Professor Robert Palmer of Princeton University for trying to have a systematic theory of the Revolution, he refuses to consider the possibility that there are aspects of the Revolution that the Americans can understand better than even the most enlightened Englishman.

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(Not, probably, better than Scotchmen or Irishmen.) Thus it was Dean Palmer who has recently pointed out to us that Thomas Jefferson, Minister to the Most Christian King, when called in as a *docteur ès révolutions* was in fact far too conservative for even very mild members of the body which was creating itself as a National Assembly. There is a good deal of Jefferson which might be read as if it came from Burke. And perhaps a discussion of why Jefferson thought thus in 1789 and later rejoiced in the fall of Bonaparte and even in the restoration of Louis XVIII *might* be a profitable exercise. Perhaps Jefferson was right—and Georges Lefebvre, that patriotic Jacobin historian, was wrong in not rejoicing at the fall of Napoleon or in admiring the role of an *émigré* like General Moreau. Yet as a brilliant young Cambridge historian has recently said, "It is right to lament the issue of the Battle of Leipzig, but it is wrong to lament the issue of the Battle of Waterloo...."

However, although I do not accept everything that Mr. Cobb asserts, apart from his own very precise scholarship, I can hardly be critical of a book which shares my view of that most despicably bad modern French statesman, Adolphe Thiers. How vastly superior to him was Pierre Laval!

Since Mr. Cobb put together these essays, Miss Hedva Ben-Israel's study[3] has been published and has been reviewed without much kindness in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Problems of the importance of the historiography of the French Revolution are still not merely academic, and perhaps at another time, with the consent of the Editor of ENCOUNTER, I may return to them. But at the moment all I can do is recommend in different ways Miss Ben-Israel's book and the two pamphlets[4] which are listed here.

[3] *English Historians on the French Revolution.* By HEDVA BEN-ISRAEL. Cambridge University Press, 63s.

[4] *Interpretations of the French Revolution.* By G. RUDÉ. *Historians and the Causes of the French Revolution.* By ALFRED COBBAN. Routledge and Kegan Paul for the Historical Association (2s. 6d.)

Learning from the Russians

By Leonard Schapiro

THERE HAS OF LATE been a minor revival of interest in a neglected aspect of Russian history—Russian political thought of the 19th century. A number of books have appeared, in England and in the United States, dealing with Russian writers on politics, and several significant works have been translated. The most important of the books to appear is Professor Robert F. Byrnes' long-awaited and definitive study of Constantine Pobedonostsev, the result of many years' research and of meticulous exploitation of his extensive *Nachlass*.[1] Pobedonostsev's *Reflections of a Russian Statesman* were sponsored in translation for the English reader by the indefatigable Olga Novikoff in 1898. The author's aim was to expose the "great falsehood of our time," the notion of popular sovereignty —adding (for the English reader) his voice to those of Maine and Carlyle. His influence in England was probably negligible; in Russia it was enormous. A senator and a member of the State Council for many years, he was tutor to the last two Emperors, and, for twenty five years, as Director General of the Most Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church, a member of the Council of Ministers. Unoriginal, unimaginative, limited and not very honest intellectually, he exercised an influence on Alexander III and Nicholas II which was often decisive at critical moments, and disastrous. The Tsars and Pobedonostsev shared the same prejudices, acted from the same instincts, and spoke the same language: more accurately, perhaps, he articulated for them their own intuitive ideas. He was thus often able to restrain them at times when there was some chance that they could have been persuaded to make relatively minor political concessions which might have prevented the ultimate total alienation of the moderate and

LEONARD SCHAPIRO's *recent works include "Rationalism and Nationalism in Russian 19th-Century Political Thought" (1967, Yale University Press), "A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" (1960, Eyre & Spottiswoode), and "The Origin of the Communist Autocracy" (1955, George Bell). He is Professor of Political Science with special reference to Russian Studies at the London School of Economics.*

[1] *Pobedonostsev: His Life and Thought.* By ROBERT F. BYRNES. Indiana University Press, 1968, $15; American University Publishers Group, 143s.

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loyal elements in Russian society from the autocracy. The consequences were the unfortunate constitutional reforms of 1906 (too much *and* too late) and the revolution of 1917.

Pobedonostsev is usually described as a conservative. It is an inaccurate description, since conservatism does not mean merely the determination to resist all change and the refusal to adapt to the realities of a changing society, which usually characterised Pobedonostsev. Conservatism in politics is the philosophy of change and adaptation without sacrificing the tradition and achievements of the past. Occasionally, Pobedonostsev had his moments of vision. Thus, a profound supporter of unlimited autocracy, he foresaw the need to reform the land-holding system on the lines of the Stolypin reforms 17 years before they were in the event inaugurated. But in general he was opposed to social mobility; he was intolerant, anti-Semitic and anti-feminist. However, many of the evils which he deplored were real enough. It is not for us, living in the aftermath of mass democracy, amidst the near-ruin of moral standards, leadership, order and cultural values, to scoff at this simple indignation. But indignation without remedy is of little use, and Pobedonostsev had no remedy beyond obstinate resistance to reform at a time when his country badly needed reform.

THERE WERE SOME OTHER Russian thinkers in the course of the nineteenth century who tackled the problem of reforming the political system without either sacrificing the traditional character of the country or yet deciding that the first necessary step towards reform was to blow the whole place up. Yet, to read some of our historians, one might imagine that there was no choice for a Russian intellectual in the 19th century between Pobedonostsev and the revolutionaries. Names like Granovsky, Chicherin, Redkin, Kavelin, Kovalevsky, Koni or Shipov hardly figure in most of the accounts of 19th-century Russian thought in English—to say nothing of Soviet accounts. We are most usually offered a version of political thought in Russia before 1917 where Revolution as a desirable end is taken for granted, and all thinkers are, consciously or unconsciously, judged in terms of their contribution to this laudable objective. And yet, the problem of achieving progress and reform, while at the same time avoiding the cataclysm of the kind of violent revolution advocated by the Decembrist Pestel, by Chernyshevsky, Bakunin, Tkachev and Lenin, was one of the two main preoccupations of several generations of Russian minds—from Pushkin to Miliukov—in the century before the revolution. The other all-absorbing theme was the question

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of Russia's place in Europe: ought Russia to go the same way as the countries of Western Europe, borrow institutions from them, in fact, as she had borrowed ideas? Or was Russia destined to follow a quite different, and greatly superior, historical path of her own—as, say, Pobedonostsev and Herzen, in their different ways, believed?

The chasm between evolution and revolution opened early in the century. It was already evident among the Decembrists. But in its most graphic form it is to be found in the account by P. V. Annenkov of the famous "Remarkable Decade," of 1839 to 1849, which has now happily at long last been made available in a readable (if not always accurate) translation.[2] It is an account of the intellectual development and tribulations of a circle of outstanding men which included (besides Annenkov himself) Belinsky, Herzen, Granovsky, Kireevsky, Bakunin, Botkin, and Kavelin. Annenkov describes, at the dawn of what was later to become the revolutionary movement, the gulf which formed between those who emotionally embraced violent revolution as the ultimate necessary and even desirable solution, and those who were appalled by the horrors which they instinctively apprehended from the coming revolution, and by their conviction that a revolution would not necessarily solve all the problems. The gulf was symbolised by the estrangement which took place in 1846 between Granovsky on the one hand, and Herzen and Belinsky on the other. Granovsky, one of the most penetrating Russian thinkers of the 19th century (almost completely negelected by modern historians) viewed socialism as it was developing in France with apprehension. He regarded it as

> the malady of the age, all the more dangerous . . . in that it teaches one to look for solutions to the problems of social life not in the arena of politics, which it despises, but apart from that arena, whereby it undermines both it and itself.

Herzen and Belinsky, in contrast, while regarding many of the egalitarian pronouncements of socialists as "puerile," nevertheless viewed the impending disintegration of European civilisation under the impact of socialism "without calling for, but also without terror of, the havoc" it was bound (not "supposed," as Mr. Titunik will have it) to produce. They believed that from the ashes of the old civilisation of Europe would arise a phoenix—a new order of things to be the crowning achievement and the last word of its thousand-year-long development.

[2] *The Extraordinary Decade. Literary Memoirs of P. V. Annenkov.* Edited by Arthur P. Mendel. Translated by Irwin R. Titunik. University of Michigan Press, 1968, $8.50; T.A.B.S., £4.

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HERZEN in his memoirs has also left an account of the estrangement between him and Granovsky, along with a warm, moving and generous tribute to the man whom he venerated, in spite of all differences of outlook. (Readers of Dostoevsky's *Possessed*, in which the character of Sergei Trofimovich Verkhovensky was intended by the author to portray Granovsky, should be warned that this was as grotesque a misrepresentation of the man as Karmazinov, in the same novel, was of Turgenev.) It was characteristic of Herzen that he should have devoted his entire account of the rift between him and Granovsky in 1846 (in Chapter 32 of his *Memoirs*) to the other cause which underlay it—Herzen's militant atheism and materialism which Granovsky could accept neither philosophically nor emotionally.

It is unlikely that in later years when he wrote his account Herzen ever realised the significance of the gulf which divided those Russians who rejected revolution from those, like himself, who were half in love with it. Herzen was a typical man of the "Left"—a kind of Slav Kingsley Martin with genius added. He was generous in mind, with a wide intellectual range and a fine historical sense. When it came to political issues his judgments came from the heart and not from the head. He had quite predictable built-in reactions to certain matters like religion, monarchy, and the established order. But he also supported lost causes with no thought for himself—like the cause of Poland in 1863—and thereby alienated the mostly chauvinistic radicals inside Russia. He did more than any Russian to stimulate passionate hatred of tyranny and oppression inside his country: but he gave little guidance either on what freedom means, or on what the preservation of it entails. Whatever views one may hold of Herzen as a political thinker, it would be hard to deny either the irresistibly attractive qualities of the man or the literary genius which found its best expression in his very long memoirs, *My Past and Thoughts*, composed in fits and starts, and in different sections, in the fifteen years between 1852 and 1867. The new edition of the English translation which has recently appeared is not only much fuller than Mrs. Constance Garnett's (published in 1924–1927), but has also been considerably revised by Humphrey Higgins.[3] The result is an accurate and readable version which at times even succeeds in capturing the magic of the original Russian.

Herzen's politics of the heart are nowhere more evident than in his conflict with Boris Nikovaevich Chicherin, the lawyer, historian and philosopher. Chicherin's respect for legal order, so alien to most Russians, his search for stability in institutions and not in slogans, his realism about the dangers of revolutionary enthusiasm before conditions were ripe for change, earned him the hatred of his contemporaries on "the left." His tireless advocacy of civil liberty and of modifications of the autocratic system through the introduction of representative institutions antagonised court circles and Pobedonostsev (with whom after many years of friendship he quarrelled in 1882). Herzen and Chicherin clashed over articles which Herzen published in the *Bell* in 1858, at a time when all hopes were set on the emancipation of the serfs and on other reforms which it was believed must follow it, calling for a revolution by the peasants, and for emancipation "from below." One can understand and sympathise with the Russian liberals and radicals who in the years after the initial reforms of Alexander II of 1861–64 were progressively driven to more extreme positions by the intransigence of the autocracy in not letting those reforms follow their logical conclusion towards representative government. But in 1858? When Chicherin called on Herzen, Herzen was immediately repelled.

> There was a cold light in his eyes, [he recalls in the *Memoirs*] and there was a challenge and a terrifying repellent self-assurance in the tone of his voice. From his first words I felt that this was not an opponent, but an enemy.

What utter nonsense this seems—until one recalls that Russia is the country above all others where "left" and "right" have always been ready to unite in hatred of the frail and vulnerable centre. Witness Turgenev's fate in Russian intellectual history. The passage from "left" to "right" has always been easy—as shown by the careers of Tikhomirov, Azef, Malinovsky, and of many hundreds more. Those who have stayed steadfast at the point of balance have been few indeed, and always the objects of hatred and contempt. Even Dr. Walicki,[4] who, after all, is a Pole and not a Russian, is being very unfair when he dismisses Chicherin as no more than a straight Hegelian who believed in History and in a strong state. But much can be forgiven Dr. Walicki whose recent volume on the Russian Populists is, like all his work, full of most valuable insights and penetrating analysis.

The most interesting aspect of the development of the Populists (of whom Herzen and his

[3] *My Past and Thoughts. The Memoirs of Alexander Herzen.* Translated by Constance Garnett. Revised by Humphrey Higgins. With an Introduction by Isaiah Berlin. Four Volumes. London; Chatto & Windus, £10 10s. New York; Alfred A. Knopf, $30.

[4] A. Walicki. *The Controversy over Capitalism: Studies in the Social Philosophy of the Russian Populists.* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 45s.

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friend Ogarev were the original inspirers) was that their turn towards conspiracy, organisational discipline, assassination and violence came almost involuntarily. It was not that they rejected either violence or assassination. But they believed (or many of them did) along with Bakunin that the violence must come from the people, just as the revolution must come from the people: the populist revolutionary must only stimulate and guide the natural instincts of the people. Opinions differed on the nature of these natural instincts—glorious destruction, rapine, and arson, according to Bakunin; wise, socialist self-government, according to Herzen.

The heart-searching which led to the acceptance of a programme of violent deeds in 1879 was not due to any fear of bloodshed. What repelled many Populists was the transition which this signified in their eyes to "political" action, as distinct from serving the spontaneous, social process by stimulating peasant revolts or by trying to educate peasant leaders—as they had done hitherto. In any event, the murder of Alexander II on 1 March 1881, without any preparation either for widespread revolt or for seizure of power, was a completely futile "political" act. Nevertheless, the Populists acquired some of the elements of politics in the course of their transition to this novel and alien policy. They even began occasionally to think in terms of constitutional development and civil rights—something which had hitherto been totally foreign to the whole movement. When in September 1881 President Garfield died as the result of a wound inflicted by an assassin some months before, the remnants of the Executive Committee of the *People's Will* issued a Declaration of sympathy to the American people, and of protest against the assassination, adding the following words:

> In a country where personal freedom provides the opportunity for the honest battle of ideas, where the free will of the people determines not only the law but the persons of the rulers—in such a country to use political assassination as a means of struggle is to display the same spirit of despotism as the one which we have set ourselves the task of destroying in Russia.

(On a lower level, the recent reaction of Czech students to the antics of revolutionary students in America, France or Britain was very similar in its censoriousness.)

Dr. Walicki is concerned entirely with the philosophy of populism, not with the politics of the Populists. His interpretation is perhaps at times open to debate. But he deals perceptively and learnedly with the side of populism which illustrates the second peculiarity that distinguishes modern Russian political thought: the

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desire to avoid capitalist development on Western lines, and the belief that Russia could follow a different and superior path to socialism from that which was open to Western Europe. (Peter Struve was probably right in pointing out that this was in essence a continuation of the debate initiated by the Slavophiles against the "Westerners" in the 1840s.) But all this line of thought was overtaken by events—or so it was believed at the time. By the end of the century the peasant commune was in decay, the industrial "take-off" was now well under way, something like what German Socialists called a proletariat was discernible in Russia. It was the turn for Marxism, with its optimistic message of the inexorable social revolution. Marxism, moreover, satisfied Westerners (like Struve) both because it was believed to be the last word in economic science and because it held out the promise that along with capitalism would come such benefits as law, order, and civilised government, which in turn would lay the foundations for the future social revolution. The only trouble was (and very few discerned it at the time) that all this was totally irrelevant to Russia which still retained all the vestiges of an Asiatic despotism. One of the few who did at times realise this was the most learned Marxist of them all—Plekhanov. But it was only towards the end of his life, shocked and horrified by the Bolshevik seizure of power, a sick and disappointed man, that he at last posed the awful question to Lev Deich: Were we perhaps wrong to launch social democracy in Russia, at a time when the country was not socially ripe for it?...

BUT NO ONE POSED THIS QUESTION in the years when social democracy was on the march, in the first decade of the century. The debate lumbered on between the "orthodox" Marxists and the innovator Lenin. It has taken many years before it has become evident that the former were largely irrelevant, and that the latter bore very little relation to Marxism. Among recent publications is a very welcome translation of two pamphlets by one of the most moderate and intelligent of the "orthodox" Marxists, Akimov —one on the Second Congress of the Social Democrats, the other the earliest history of the Russian Social Democratic movement.[5] Akimov was a gradualist by temperament who, like many followers of Marx, believed that the revolution of the future must come about almost of its own accord as the result of the development by the working class of its social consciousness, evolved in the course of its democratic struggle for its rights. This view was, of course, diametrically opposed to Lenin's doctrine, as expounded in *What is to be Done* (and earlier), that a democratic struggle could never lead to revolution, but only to "mere trade-unionism." Akimov was, incidentally, one of the two who alone, of all the delegates, joined issue with Lenin on the main thesis of *What is to be Done* at the Second Congress. (The other, Martynov, eventually ended up by becoming a Bolshevik.)

It is, of course, conceivable that Akimov (and many who were after 1904 to become Mensheviks) could have been right: if the autocracy had allowed constitutional order to develop gradually (as Chicherin had urged), if it had learnt to tame its wild socialists by absorption into political life instead of leaving them alienated and enraged on the fringes of illegality, if liberals (like Miliukov[6]) had had less passion and more sense, if..., if....

The most important truth about revolutionaries, so much neglected in revolutionary history,[7] is that they are motivated by temperament and emotion much more than by reason or doctrine. Impatience, frustration, envy, megalomania, resentment, alienation—these are the important facts in the kaleidoscope of eccentricities that so much of Russian revolutionary history reveals. The great division between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks itself, which is foreshadowed in Akimov's pamphlets, was a matter of temperament rather than doctrine: there are many periods when differences in doctrine between the two factions are scarcely discernible. But, in temperament, they drifted ever farther apart. On the Bolshevik side were grouped the adventurers, the impatient, the romantics, the men who saw in an assertion of "hardness," or of indifference to accepted moral standards, a kind of self-justification or compensation for a generation of Russian intellectuals humiliated by their own ineffectiveness. Lenin, with his familiar clichés about the virtues of the revolutionary—so different from the "kid gloves" and the "young ladies' finishing school" and all that—actively encouraged this temperamental affinity among his supporters and would-be supporters. Above all, Bolshevism appealed because it offered the prospect of immediate action: the

[5] *Vladimir Akimov on the Dilemmas of Russian Marxism 1895–1903*. "The Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party" and "A Short History of the Social Democratic Movement in Russia." Two Texts in Translation, Edited and Introduced by Jonathan Frankel. Cambridge University Press, £3.

[6] His memoirs are also now available in translation: *Political Memorials 1905–1917* by Paul Miliukov. Edited by Arthur P. Mendel. Translated by Carl Goldberg. University of Michigan Press, 1967. $9.75; T.A.B.S., £4 12s.

[7] Though happily not in this journal. See, for example, Melvin J. Lasky's "The Prometheans: On the Imagery of Fire & Revolution," ENCOUNTER, October 1968.

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more "orthodox" Marxism of Menshevism at best offered hope for the distant future. And indeed, as time wore on, the Bolsheviks with their bank robberies and their internecine warfare in the Duma, became in many ways the party of the activists: the Mensheviks, who talked of strikes and demonstrations, became (without abandoning their theoretical faith in ultimate revolution) the party of the gradualists.

IT WAS ABOVE ALL among the real eccentrics that temperament, or self-gratification, revealed itself as so much more important than doctrine. There was Nechaev, for example, who played at revolution as Glasgow gangs play at war—with a fake organisation, with every conceivable form of deceit, mystification, blackmail, defamation and intimidation—and with little more effective result than to bring discredit on the revolutionary movement, and to produce a reaction against revolutionary activity among the Populists. Yet, to Nechaev goes the credit of stumbling on a new revolutionary principle (familiar in practice, if not in theory, to every rioting student today) —the binding force of mutual complicity in an act of violence. It was to test his theory that Nechaev organised the murder of one member of his miniscule revolutionary group jointly by all the others, on the trumped-up allegation that the victim, Ivanov, was planning a betrayal. (Many years were to pass before this theory of the cohesiveness of joint acts of violence was to be developed by Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon *expressis verbis*, and by the exponents of guerrilla warfare by implication.) One would be tempted to dismiss all this as a mere aberration in the serious stream of revolution—as indeed Nechaev's contemporaries tended to do. And yet, Nechaev stood close to Tkachev and (until the break between them) to Bakunin; and these in turn left their imprint on none other than Lenin. The web of revolutionary thought—or temperament—is too closely woven for us to be able to say that this or that thread can be ignored.

THE RECOGNITION BY HISTORIANS that Lenin must be regarded as more closely related to Russian tradition than to Marxism has made it possible to assess his true place within Russian 19th-century political thought. He was on the revolutionary side of the line which had divided Granovsky from Herzen; but much more than Herzen, he was unswervingly committed to revolution, to revolution for its own sake almost. In this respect he derived more from Bakunin than from Herzen, or from any of the Populists. He drew inspiration (as he tells us himself) from the organisational methods of the *People's Will*. But, unlike them, he laid his plans for the seizure of power with care, and did not just hope for the best from a futile, dramatic act. He learned, probably from Tkachev, that the first thing to do was to seize state power, not to destroy it; popular support could come later. To a much greater extent than Tkachev he studied the "revolutionary situation," the dangerous point at which both the habit of obedience by the population and the ruler's confidence in their own authority breaks down. Lenin's views thus, if only unconsciously, evoked echoes among revolutionaries of very different traditions from those of social democracy. At the same time the ostensible derivation of Lenin's views from Marx attracted the "Westerners," those who for generations past had decided that Russia must go the same way as Western Europe, both in the good and in the bad respects. The universality of Marxism guaranteed for them that the way would be the same: its optimism, that the ultimate triumph would be on the side of the good.

This fact that Lenin was "all things to all men" in the traditions of the Russian revolutionary world explained both his narrow victory in October 1917 and the difficulty which he found in holding it. For the socialists of all kinds, though not prepared to support him, were equally not ready to oppose him until their illusions had been cured by Bolshevism in practice. It was then too late. The Bolshevik victory in 1917 was a graveyard of many ideals, of much nobility and of much self-sacrifice. What a terrifying journey it has been from the "Remarkable Decade" to the concentration camps of Stalin! The police state of Nicholas the First is now replaced by the police state of Brezhnev and Kosygin. What happened to that revolution from which so many had hoped for so much? The same young men are still calling for the same liberties as their forefathers demanded a hundred and more years ago:

> Our society needs now, like the air it breathes, an all-embracing democratisation. The right of minority groups to opposition must be established by law. The activity of the organs of authority must be placed under public control. . . . Only a democratic society is the true school of humanism.[8]

And, like their forefathers, they rot in gaol for having the courage to voice their demands—except that the gaols are if anything more brutal, and their inhabitants certainly very much more numerous. Oh, the pity of it all!

[8] Quoted from an "underground" document containing a comment by a group of the "technical intelligentsia" living in Estonia on Academician A. Sakharov's pamphlet "Progress, Co-existence and Intellectual Freedom." See "The Soviet Spiritual and Intellectual Ferment," by Peter Reddaway, *Frontier* (May 1969), p. 95.

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Second Beginning

By Asa Briggs

ECONOMIC HISTORIANS have never had their own way with the industrial revolution: perhaps for this reason many of them have been unhappy about the term with its obvious cross-references to politics and its implicit, if sometimes forgotten, comparison between experience in Britain and France. Yet it was not only the idea of industrial revolution which raised such issues. The term "industrialism" carried with it more than a narrowly economic set of concepts: like any other *ism* it had its advocates and its opponents. Shortly before his death St.-Simon commissioned Rouget de l'Isle to write a new industrial *Marseillaise*, and a *Chant des Industriels* was sung, in St.-Simon's presence, at the opening of a textile factory at St. Ouen in 1821.

In recent years it has become almost a platitude to say that the industrial revolution changed ways of feeling as much as it changed ways of working or thinking, and more attention has been paid by historians of literature and of art than ever before both to the responses of particular writers to the rise of modern industry and to the kind of society which was being "destroyed" or "created" in the process. And although the early British industrial revolution, portent rather than prototype, seemed to have only a limited amount to do directly with "science," science and technology which came together dramatically, if often falteringly, during the last decades of the 19th century have seldom been kept apart by the commentators. "The age of science and technology," Karl Jaspers has written comprehensively, "is a kind of second beginning, comparable to the first invention of tools and fire-making."

Within this extended context of inquiry Professor Landes' book,[1] for all its erudition, is somewhat disappointing. Its ambitious title promises much. It is only at the end of the book, however, that the Prometheus myth is discussed—on the very last page—although it has been earlier introduced briefly along with the stories of the Tower of Babel and of Eve, the serpent and the tree of knowledge. Professor Landes admits that on the first occasion when he cited the stories of Eve and Prometheus and Daedalus to his academic colleagues as evidence of the age and continuity of the spirit of striving and mastery in Western culture, they objected that the content of the myths proved rather the hostility of Western tradition to insolent aspirations. He lets the matter slide. Why did he choose his title if he believes that "one can hardly rest a serious prognosis on symbol and legend"?

Imaginative reactions to industrial revolution or to industrialism do not, indeed, figure very prominently in Professor Landes' book—either the reactions of the first poets and pamphleteers or the recent reactions of the prophets of a "post-industrial society." It is not easy, therefore, to catch either the sense of excitement or the undercurrent of uneasiness. He concludes that

> the West, at the very time when it is losing some of its own faith [why?] ... is transferring its most profound and original heresy to others. It is a dangerous export, for aspirations and pretensions are not enough—indeed, are worse than nothing if not accompanied by the values and way of thought that promote effective performance.

It would have been helpful had Professor Landes explored more fully writers as different as John Nef and Raymond Williams, both of whom have tried to put "industrialism" into perspective and to trace the development of "new structures of feeling." Words like "striving" and "mastery" require as much examination as the word "industry" itself, which was thought of as a particular human attribute before it was identified as a sector of the

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[1] *The Unbound Prometheus.* By DAVID S. LANDES. Cambridge University Press, 70s., $8.50, paper, 25s. $2.95.

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economy. Metaphors like the "taming of Nature" require to be scrutinised. We can legitimately expect such examination and scrutiny in a book called *The Unbound Prometheus*.

Yet if we forget the title, which is not easy, Professor Landes' book is a considerable achievement of synthesis within economic history. It has grown out of the chapters which he wrote for the *Cambridge Economic History* and takes the story beyond 1914 where it originally stopped. It is not a textbook but an "essay in interpretation," and its footnotes cover most, if not all, of the contributions made by other economic historians to the economic history of the last hundred and fifty years. It is strong on comparison, weaker at points where economic history is itself still weak or unresolved, as, for example, on the relation between population change and industrialisation. It does not emphasise sufficiently, perhaps, the contrast between the "individualism" of 18th- and 19th-century industrialism and the "organisation" behind 20th-century industrialism, between the wastes of "carboniferous capitalism" and the complexities inherent in the 20th-century dependence on the most accurate computation. Yet it will be widely read and appreciated as the first "general, truly comparative survey of the course of the European industrial revolution." Professor Landes' own highly original work on French economic history obviously provided him with an excellent point of departure for the kind of comparative survey he has now accomplished, undoubtedly a *tour de force* in his own subject.

PROFESSOR MATHIAS' study of England[2] makes fewer claims. It is, indeed, a useful and well-arranged textbook based on lectures given in Cambridge. It notes in its preface that "new methods are bringing a wholly new style into economic history," but it does not seek to argue whether or not the "main single change" which is going on—"the challenge of an historical method based on 'literary' evidence and unsystematic data, with its own critical evaluation, by systematic quantitative analysis" is going to satisfy the desire to explain as well as to describe. Professor Mathias admits that "the search for a verified general theory of economic growth, and further incursions of even less integrated sociological theorising, suggests that the new attempts to measure and to analyse may yield more disparate than unified conclusions," but having made the admission he proceeds honestly and competently to make the

[2] *The First Industrial Nation*. By PETER MATHIAS. Methuen, 60s., paper, 28s.

ALFRED COBBAN
The Nation State and National Self-Determination
Professor Cobban, a master of political theory and history, revised and expanded this book shortly before his death in 1968. It is indispensable to the study of both these subjects as well as to that of current affairs.
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PAVEL LITVINOV
The Demonstration in Pushkin Square
The harsh sentences passed on the Russian writers Sinyavsky and Daniel resulted in an unprecedented wave of protest. The author examines the trials of four of the protestors – brilliantly illuminating the ideals and characters of these young liberal-minded Russians.
Harvill 30s

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best of the new approach. His main comparative reference is not to Europe but to countries "wrestling with the problems of generating economic growth in developing societies in our own day," and it is well to be reminded that national income *per capita* in late nineteenth-century England may have been more than double that of a present-day undeveloped country, such as Nigeria, with a very large subsistence peasantry.

Some of the main difficulties in his presentation concern the terms of discourse. Words like "the state," "state intervention," "administrative controls" are more difficult to handle across time and place than the concept of "the market." So too is a word like "unemployment." It is one of the problems of re-writing economic history in the light of the current language of economics that the historical debate at any past moment of time is often highly simplified. Yet Professor Mathias does not neglect it. He also introduces an occasional moral judgment of his own with a significant heightening of tone.

> Some of the apostles of *laissez-faire*, who resisted every limitation imposed upon employers by statute in the name of individual liberty and the bogy of impending commercial disaster, deserved to end up on the lowest ledges of Dante's inferno. It is a false assumption that industrialisation had no tragedies or iniquities to hide.

It is when Professor Mathias has to cover a vast mass of material relative to a long period of time that the problem-centred approach which he favours inevitably tends to awkward compression, as in the brief chapter on "Agriculture, 1815–1914." Likewise in his valuable chapter on "The Free Trade System and Capital Exports" he has little space to examine the significance of "empire." His epilogue on the inter-war years deals highly selectively with a period which in many respects now seems as remote as the early years of the industrial revolution. In this context Professor Landes' comparative analysis becomes particularly relevant. Britain by then had long ceased to be the only industrial nation or the first industrial nation in the league-table sense. How far did the distinctive British experience of industrialisation—industrialisation within a society which never completely accepted industrial values—prevent it from appreciating new possibilities? Yet how and why did it avoid the more dramatic consequences of economic breakdown which can be traced in other parts of the world? What was meant by "economic policy"? Of what issue could it *not* be said that "the question is many-sided, with the policy recommendations always dependent on the diagnosis for the disease"?

In his chapter on "The Organisation of Labour and Standards of Living" Professor Mathias touches briefly on what he calls the "negative reactions" to industrialisation—the outbreaks of machine-breaking, rick-burning, "in some ways" Chartism, "the survival of a notion characteristic of the pre-industrial world." *Captain Swing*[3] is a detailed study, the first since the Hammonds', of what the authors call "the most impressive episode in the farm-labourers' long and doomed struggle against poverty and degradation." It is an interesting and important book, but it reveals clearly that if it is difficult to sort out the complex reactions (negative or positive) to "industrialism," it is even more difficult to get inside the "primitive" minds of the early 19th-century agricultural labourers, "the secret people" as they have aptly been called. Dr. Hobsbawm and Dr. Rudé accumulate a mass of evidence, most of it new, but they find it very difficult to explain the pattern of local revolt. The basic aims of the village labourers seem to have been reasonably consistent—to attain a minimum living wage and to end rural unemployment (a word they did not use)—but their protest was "multiform." Even the most careful survey of what happened in different places does not point to a definite conclusion as to why some villages were quiet and others disturbed. None the less, the one clear consequence of the village labourers' revolt, "negative reaction" or not, was that threshing machines did not return to English farms on the old scale.

> Of all the machine-breaking movements of the 19th century that of the helpless and unorganised farm labourers proved to be by far the most effective. The real name of King Ludd was Swing.

Dr. Hobsbawm and Dr. Rudé are sophisticated analysts of phenomena which may often have had very little to do with the advent of industry. Accepting as they do the necessity of industrial transformation, they insist that "it is difficult to find words for the degradation which the coming of industrial society brought to the English country labourer." We are back again at ways of thinking and feeling. The "second beginning" involves far more than statistics, and a bigger dose of Cobbett, who never had difficulty in finding words, would have brought more life into the account they give. "Literary guidance and unsystematic data" are still necessary to illuminate the human experience which is at the heart of all history, including economic history.

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[3] *Captain Swing*. By E. J. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé. Lawrence & Wishart, 70s.

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Prague: Spring & Fall

Explaining the Czech Crisis — By Z. A. B. Zeman

Two autobiographical fragments by a man and a woman who were caught up in the Prague show trial of 1952, Eugene Loebl and Josefa Slanská[1]; two journalists' accounts of the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968, by Harry Schwartz and Joseph Wechsberg[2]; two books of documents[3]; two works of academic analysis,[4] one by Philip Windsor and Adam Roberts, the other edited by Robert Rhodes James. Those are the first volumes in a fast-growing library on the Czechoslovak communist reform movement.

Rudolf Slanský, a lifelong communist, a partisan leader in the 1944 Slovak uprising, a tough and ambitious man, since March 1945 the General Secretary of the party, was awarded the Order of Socialism on 30 July 1951. At the pinnacle of his power, he was to receive the greatest honour of all: the publication of his speeches and articles in a magnificent two-volume edition which would be dispatched to every local party organisation in the remotest villages in the country, and join the collected works of President Gottwald on the dusty shelves. Four months later Slanský was arrested and handed over to the secret police. There is no record that Slanský had been critical of its methods when he was in power. That did not make them any more humane. Severe mental pressure alternated with physical torture, an appeal to loyalty to the Party was followed by haggling about the actual terms of the bogus confession. The defences of the individual personality were knocked out, one after the other. The self-confidence of the former General Secretary disappeared first, the identity of Rudolf Slanský last. He was tried, sentenced to death, and executed in December 1952. The ashes of Slanský and ten other defendants were scattered on an icy cart-track somewhere in the vicinity of Prague.

Slanský did not know that he had been condemned a year before his execution. On 6 December 1951 Klement Gottwald reported to the Central Committee on the "treason of Slanský and the leading role he played in the conspiracy against the Party and the State." Gottwald, the President and the pre-war Party leader, had taken a vicious turn against his former comrades. Why? We may never know. The circumstances at the time provided only circumstantial evidence. Stalin's break with Tito was clean; the first slanging matches of the cold war had died down; the hot war in Korea was difficult to conclude. Stalin, in the process of consolidating his East European empire, ruled out a special Czechoslovak way to socialism. In Prague, Gottwald sacrificed his comrades to Stalin and political expediency. He thereby wiped out his lifelong work.

Neither of the two books of reminiscences, one by the General-Secretary's widow, the other by a former Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade who had been sentenced to life imprisonment at the same trial, attempt to solve that puzzle. But they answer, indirectly, another and more important question. The personal quality of their reminiscences sharply illuminates the origins of the Czechoslovak reform movement, why that movement had to happen. The medieval beastliness of the examination (Dr. Loebl remarks that afterwards "I was a completely normal person, apart from the fact that I had ceased to be human"); the pitiless farce of the trial; the animal passions that those trials evoked (people's joy at the swing of the wheel of fortune was probably the kindest of those emotions). And beyond the eerie public show there were tens of thousands of Czechs and

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[1] *Sentenced and Tried.* By Eugene Loebl. Elek Books, 42s.; *Report on My Husband.* By Josefa Slanská. Hutchinson, 35s.

[2] *Prague's 200 Days.* By Harry Schwartz. Pall Mall Press, 50s.; *The Voices.* By Joseph Wechsberg. Doubleday, $3.95.

[3] *Dubcek's Blueprint for Freedom.* Edited by Hugh Lunghi and Paul Ello. William Kimber, 50s. *The Czech Black Book.* Edited by Robert Littell. Pall Mall Press, 58s.

[4] *Czechoslovakia 1968.* By Philip Windsor and Adam Roberts. Chatto & Windus, 15s.

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Slovaks who became involved in the process. No community of people can indulge in such excesses of injustice and go on living in peace together or, still less, remain civilised. Herein lies one of the main sources of the reform movement. The two books have to be seen firmly in the context otherwise they might well, on the margins of the reading public, be passed on from the sadist to the masochist.

Harry Schwartz, the *New York Times* specialist on Soviet affairs, is rather kind in his book to the former President Novotný and hard on Mr. Dubček; otherwise he gives us a crisp chronological account of the Czechoslovak events. Joseph Wechsberg, another American journalist, wrote his more personal book, *The Voices*, while he was listening to the Czech "legal" underground network in August 1968. A Czech by origin, Mr. Wechsberg is a sophisticated writer and well up to the involved task of making a foreign country both intelligible and interesting to his English-speaking audience. Can he be right in his description of Czechoslovakia as "that lovely, lonely country"? Surely it has not been left alone enough. On several occasions in their history, the Czechs have had a nasty feeling of being very crowded in their corner of central Europe.

The documents Mr. Lunghi and Professor Ello have collected in Dubček's *Blueprint for Freedom* is not quite the book we have been waiting for. Of the four political documents (all there is to the book, plus introduction and commentaries) two at least have appeared in English before as pamphlets published in Prague. The selection should have been strengthened by one of the purely economic documents and by the best of the speeches from the very articulate and quotable record of the fourth writers' congress in 1967, published by their union last summer. The *Black Book* of the Historical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences is, on the other hand, a publication the reviewer received with pleasure and read with avidity. Its editor, Mr. Robert Littell, cut down the original Czech text by about a third. The book may have been deprived of some of its historical authenticity but the story lost none of its excitement in the editing. Mr. Littell calls it "the victim's description of the crime." It is more than that. A dispassionate, blow-by-blow account of the seven days in August, it is a model of the way in which historical record may be established.

IT SHOULD BECOME required reading for anyone interested in European politics, and so should the essays in *Czechoslovakia 1968*, by two L.S.E. dons. The first one, by Mr. Philip Windsor, may be highly recommended to the attention of the members of the Party Praesidium in Moscow; the second one, by Mr. Adam Roberts, to everyone who has doubts on the justification and effectiveness of the Czechoslovak passive resistance in August 1968.

The case for military action has been recently stated, with passion and eloquence, by Mr. Pavel Tigrid in his Paris *émigré* quarterly, *Svědectví*. (Tanks are not for being kicked at by boys wearing tennis shoes; they are for shooting at, by other tanks.) The same question was raised, in a more magisterial manner, in the scholarly London quarterly, *Government and Opposition*, and again in Mr. Kamil Winter's letter to *The Times* (6 June 1969). It is a crucial question for the Czechs because in that way they deepen their choicest inferiority complex. On two occasions in the last thirty years they have saved up for sophisticated military equipment and kept their troops polishing their buttons and boots, like good soldiers. On two occasions, the troops and the gear have remained confined to their barracks, garages, and hangars. The spotless army was given no opportunity to get soiled.

The Czechs were wrong not to have used their army in 1938. They were right in 1968. In his essay, Mr. Roberts gives most of the reasons why. In the small hours of 21 August their army was heavily outnumbered. On that day, the proportion of foreign to local troops on Czechoslovak territory was 3:1. The Czech army would have been cut to ribbons within days, if not hours. It was not prepared to meet an attack from the directions it came from; its strategic plans were known to the invading Powers; its intelligence was fully integrated into the Warsaw Pact system. The impulse for an armed action would have had to come from the Party Praesidium, which was divided.

After 1938, Mr. Roberts points out, Hitler had achieved the dismemberment and subjugation of Czechoslovakia in two easy moves: in 1968 the Russians and their allies ran into a spirited political and civil resistance. Under heavy pressure, the Czechs and the Slovaks maintained their unity. No alternative government, accommodating towards the occupying Powers, emerged. The President was able to bring party and government leaders from detention to the conference table. The spontaneous, intricate, and peaceful operation by the Czechs and Slovaks surprised the Warsaw Pact forces more than a conventional violent response would have done. It had a stunning effect on them: the people of Czechoslovakia have their August to look back to, with pride.

Mr. Windsor's subject is high strategy: what the events in Czechoslovakia looked like from the Kremlin and why the Soviet leaders in the end decided to ask their generals to deal with the situation. In his closely argued essay, Mr.

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Windsor brings out well the contrast, in the early stages of the reform movement, between the novelty of Mr. Dubček's programme and his conventional foreign policy, and he properly stresses the new style, rather than new institutional forms, introduced into Czechoslovak politics by Dubček. He goes on to describe the growing isolation of the conservatives in the party as the movement of reform gathered momentum (a development with far-reaching consequences) and the way in which the balance between spontaneity and control was disrupted by the invasion.

Those points are however incidental to Mr. Windsor's main thesis. It is that Czechoslovakia was at the centre of a deep crisis in the Soviet Union itself and that, in Moscow's view, developments in Eastern Europe began threatening the cohesion of the Soviet military and diplomatic system more than the dispute with China. The uncertain touch in the treatment of Mr. Dubček and his friends by the Soviet authorities after the invasion, some significant discrepancies in the Soviet press and (most of all) the sharp contrast between the smoothness of the military operation and the unevenness of its political follow-through are Mr. Windsor's chief arguments. He may well be right. The high content of speculation is in the nature of his enterprise which often moves in the stratosphere where strategists feel most at home.

WHEN THE SOVIET LEADERS ordered the military to re-enter Czechoslovakia they acquired a political problem of the first magnitude. The earlier manoeuvres had made a lot of the points the Moscow Praesidium may have wished to make. They took a calculated risk, and we may only wonder why.

It seems that, in the spring and summer crisis, personalities came into play, almost as much as strategic plans. The communication between Prague and Moscow that had existed in the Novotný era almost entirely broke down under Dubček. Members of the Soviet diplomatic mission in Prague, Chervonenko and Udaltsov, had known Novotný and his men well but were out of touch with the reformers and forces they represented. This was especially true of the Slovaks. The Russians' acquaintance with Slovakia was largely confined to occasional hunting trips or travelling in sleeping cars, on their way to Moscow.

The contact was however resumed in an unsatisfactory, intermittent way early in the summer of 1968, by those Czechs and Slovaks who believed that their fellow-countrymen were going too far too fast. Vasil Bilak is a case in point. A shrewd politician who had been closely connected with the anti-Novotný movement in the winter of 1967–8, he held a very realistic view of the line-up of the forces inside the Prague Praesidium at the time. But he was a Communist who had spent all his adult life in a party which upheld two basic beliefs: that its power in the State should be in no way limited and that the Soviet Union was the best guarantee of the Party's position. He saw no reason why the situation should change and behaved in a way the Russians expected Dubček to behave. By taking a hard detached look at the party Dubček put himself outside it as far as the Russians were concerned.

It may be that uncertainty about the position of the Party, all the vested interests of the Party and bureaucratic élite (it is difficult to imagine members of the Moscow Praesidium having differences on that point), combined with an uncertainty as to what Dubček and his comrades were exactly up to, created deep concern in Moscow. In addition, the firm embrace by the Kiesinger-Brandt coalition of the East-West *détente* as the policy which would make the reunification of Germany possible, as well as the accompanying diplomatic practices, made a powerful impact in Moscow. (See the analysis of Russia's European policy by Richard Lowenthal, in his ENCOUNTER articles, January and February 1969.) Fear of Germany gave the East European block its cohesion: the Russians are finding the handling of a reasonable Germany difficult. (It is not surprising; the historical record since the peace of Brest-Litovsk in 1918 speaks for itself.) Anyway, an understanding with Washington combined with a tough European policy may suit Moscow better.

THE STUDY EDITED by Mr. Robert Rhodes James has a useful chronology (but why "select"?) of the Czechoslovak events; otherwise it covers a ground similar to Mr. Windsor's. It is an expanded version of a background paper which was put before a conference of experts at the Institute of International Organisations at Sussex University in October 1968; the individual contributions disappear in the homogenised text. In what we may assume to be the collective view of the conference, the Czechoslovak crisis "has been a salutary reminder that *realpolitik* remains a dominant factor in European, and world, politics. And it is here argued that such a conclusion is not necessarily a depressing one." Depressing, not; trite, certainly.

Among the first contingent of Czechoslovak books, Mr. Philip Windsor's and Mr. Adam Roberts' *Czechoslovakia 1968*, and the *Black Book*, have an obviously lasting quality. Future writers will probably have to take a closer look at the developments in Czechoslovakia before August 1968 and set them against their proper

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European background. In Czechoslovakia of 1968 the inner mechanism of a communst régime lay revealed, a spectacle fascinating for the historian and the student of politics. They have their work cut out for them, and it will not be easy. Neither of our leading British centres for the study of Eastern Europe, in London or in Oxford, has any of the newspapers and periodicals that played the major role in the Czechoslovak movement of reform.

The Tucholsky Complaint

By Walter Z. Laqueur

THE STUDY OF GERMANY during the Weimar period has become a fashionable subject of late, and it is not difficult to see why. My American students certainly find it more interesting than the history of Britain and France —not to mention Italy or Russia—during that period; it all seems, to use the inevitable adjective, so relevant. The study of this Periclean age of *avant-garde* culture, youth revolt, sexual experimentation and radical politics seems to provide not only interesting raw material for dissertations but also inspiration for the present day. There are undoubtedly certain parallels, some of them rather disturbing in view of what followed the Weimar period. In a review in the New York *Times* (24 Nov. 1968) of Peter Gay's fascinating little book[1] I singled out some of the achievements of this exciting decade, as well as the moral relativism and political naiveté so characteristic of that epoch, the dominant position in it of so many fake gurus, the enthusiasm for revolutionaries in far-away countries, the lack of tact and commonsense among the intellectuals. Reading Mr. Deak[2] and re-reading Mr. Gay I now realise that there is one aspect which is usually neglected or glossed over, perhaps because it is so delicate and yet it is one of the key issues.

I mean, of course, the Jewish question.

Mr. Deak's book, I ought to add in explanation, is a political history of the *Weltbühne* and its circle; the *Weltbühne* was an independent left-wing weekly, immensely stimulating and highly readable, often very witty, the implacable enemy of both the nationalist Right and the Social Democratic establishment. The majority of its contributors and, no doubt, most of its readers were Jews. Mr. Deak is a little too generous towards his heroes:

> They were never destructive [he writes] on the contrary, they aimed at redemption, they dreamed of a socialist society with democratic instrumental forms. . . .

The evidence does not bear out such charitable assumptions. Kurt Tucholsky, the leading spirit of the circle, said that since 1913 he had belonged to those people "who think that the German spirit is poisoned almost beyond recovery, who do not believe in an improvement, who regard German democracy as a façade and a lie." How could he be anything but destructive if he did not believe in a possible recovery? True, the members of the circle had their dreams of a socialist society, of pacifism and humanism, but the writers of the *Weltbühne* lacked the political and economic experience (and often also the necessary common sense) to provide any valid answers to the most pressing problems facing Germany at the time. The singular lack of impact of this circle, its political sterility, is surely connected with the fact that these were Jewish writers who, with all their talent, were quite oblivious to one basic existential fact: that they were living in an intellectual ghetto, that the great majority of Germans did not just dislike them, but disputed their very right to have a voice as far as the future of Germany was concerned. The fact that these *Weltbühne* contributors believed that they were *das andere Deutschland*, the other Germany, the conscience of the German nation, was not of the slightest significance to anyone but themselves. Nor did it matter that most of them had no longer any tie with the Jewish community, or like Tucholsky were actually converts to Protestantism.

To explain their singular lack of resonance

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[1] *Weimar Culture.* By PETER GAY. Harper & Row, $5.95; Secker & Warburg, 50s.

[2] *Weimar Germany's Left Wing Intellectuals.* By ISTVAN DEAK. University of California Press, $9.75; IBEG (2–4 Brook Street, London, W.1), 93s.

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and to illustrate the whole background against which they worked, it may be useful to refer to a controversy that had taken place a decade earlier.

In March 1913 a young Jewish writer named Moritz Goldstein published an article entitled "German-Jewish Parnassus" in the fortnightly *Kunstwart* which created something of a minor scandal, provoked some 90 letters to the editor, and was discussed for years throughout the German press. Goldstein argued, to put it briefly, that the Jews were managing the culture of a people which denied them both the right and the capacity to do so. The newspapers in the capital were about to become a Jewish monopoly; almost all directors of the Berlin theatres were Jews; so were many actors. German musical life without the Jews was almost unthinkable; and the study of German literature was also to a large extent in Jewish hands. Everyone knew it, only the Jews pretended it was not worthy of notice; for what mattered, they claimed, were their achievements, their cultural and humanistic activities. This, said Goldstein, was a dangerous fallacy for "the others do not feel that we are Germans." We could show the others that we were not inferior (his argument continued), but wasn't it naïve to assume that this would in any way diminish their dislike and antipathy? There was a basic anomaly in the Jewish situation. The liberal Jewish intellectuals were good Europeans, but they were also split personalities, divorced from the people amidst whom they were living. They could make a great contribution to science, for science knew no national borders. But in literature and the arts (and he should have added: in the political sphere) any major initiative had to be rooted in a popular and national framework. From Homer to Tolstoy all the really great works had their origins in the native soil, the homeland, the people. And this "rootedness" the Jews were lacking, despite all their intellectual and emotional efforts.

Among those who answered Goldstein there was the poet Ernst Lissauer, who during the first World War received notoriety in connection with his "Hate England" song. He bitterly opposed any attempt to restore a ghetto on German soil or a "Palestinian enclave"; on the contrary, the process of assimilation was to be carried to its successful conclusion. If so many Jewish intellectuals were radicals and had as yet no feeling for the German national spirit, this was, no doubt, because they were as yet discriminated against in so many ways. But once these barriers would fall they, too, would be fully integrated into the mainstream of German life.

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Penguins have some very important historians contributing to their Autumn list. For example, there are two new volumes added to **The Pelican Economic History of Britain** from Christopher Hill and E. J. Hobsbawm. In addition, E. H. Carr continues his massive **A History of Soviet Russia** with **The Interregnum**, covering the years 1923-1924. Other notable names include Hugh Trevor-Roper, Daniel J. Boorstin, and J. P. V. D. Balsdon, making the Penguin list well worth keeping an eye on.

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Ten years later a republic had been installed, and Jewish intellectuals were no longer impeded in their professional careers: they became professors, government officials, even cabinet ministers. Many still belonged to the radical fringe, more, in effect, than in Wilhelminian Germany. This affinity between Jewish intellectuals and radicalism had deep historical roots. Lissauer's explanation was at best only half true; the people he was writing about had not been radical in politics because they were out merely for personal betterment. At least in passing it ought to be mentioned that the political commitment of these intellectuals did not by any means reflect the orientation of the German Jewish Community as a whole which, as Professor Turi has recently shown in a massive and highly informative study, was always surprisingly "*Staatstreu*," giving consistent electoral support to the centre parties. But who was interested in the voting patterns of half a million Jews? What mattered were the men and women in the limelight, from Marx to Rosa Luxemburg, from Kurt Eisner to Kurt Tucholsky: that was the "Jewish element" in German politics as far as public opinion was concerned.

IN 1928 Tucholsky published a copiously illustrated volume of little notes and essays: *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*. This was a broadside against the *Reichswehr*, the Church, the judiciary (formerly the people of *Dichter und Denker*, the Germans had become a nation of *Richter und Henker*, Judges and executioners), the beer-drinking students, Hindenburg, the Social Democratic commanders of the Prussian police, Stresemann, trade union secretaries, and almost everyone else in a position of authority. It was an all-out attack not just against the German *Philister*, his customs, the way he arranged his bourgeois home and educated his children but against the German way of life in general, a denunciation not merely of militarism but of national defence as such. ("There is no secret of the German army I would not hand over readily to a foreign power," Tucholsky wrote.) He ridiculed not just the veteran associations with their chauvinistic slogans and parades, but derided systematically and with great skill all and any manifestation of patriotism. The impression that emerged was that everything specifically German was *a priori* bad, and had to be eradicated. In an article on "The Face of a German" Tucholsky depicted the average German *à la* George Grosz:

> A rather thick-set head, a none-too-high forehead; cold, small eyes, a nose that likes to lower itself into a drinking glass, a disagreeable toothbrush moustache. . . .

It was a caricature of Weimar Germany, some of it quite true, much of it distorted—all in questionable taste.

"For 225 pages we have said *no*"—Tucholsky concluded his book, "now we wanted to say *yes*. Yes to the landscape and to the countryside of Germany." But there are beautiful landscapes all over the globe. Tucholsky in any case preferred Paris to Germany. ("Here no one steps on my toes, here people are kind and polite, here the cars travel smoothly and fast, here clouds are still clouds and stones are still stones, here it still makes sense to be alive.") Some of the pictures in the book are very funny indeed; others are embarrassing or, in a perspective of 40 years simply inexplicable. The one which scandalised most people at the time was a *photo montage*, "Animals Look at You," showing eight somewhat decrepit and rather ugly gentlemen, aged 65 or above, most of them in military uniform. It is a pathetic sight, but there is nothing particularly animal or evil about them given the unfortunate fact of life that men usually look more handsome and virile at thirty than at seventy and that babies are more likely to smile than retired generals and admirals. Did Tucholsky mean to imply that the German army and police needed better-looking officers? If so, they certainly got them a few years later; Heydrich, for instance, was a man of striking appearance.

In an essay not long ago Gordon Craig noted that Tucholsky's great weakness, shared by most of the engaged writers of his period, was a lack of selectivity about his targets; he was indiscriminate in this respect and immoderate in his expenditure of ammunition. Tucholsky and his friends thought that the German Judge of their day was the most evil person imaginable and that the German prisons were the most inhumane; later they got Freisler and Auschwitz. They imagined that Stresemann and the Social Democrats were the most reactionary politicians in the world; soon after they had to face Hitler, Goebbels, and Goering. They sincerely believed that fascism was already ruling Germany, until the horrors of the Third Reich overtook them. Their period was one of unprecedented political freedom in Germany, when the leaders of the Weimar Republic—to quote another recent historian—exhausted their energies in hard combat with Hugenberg and Hitler:

> Tucholsky stood aside and jeered at them. They could have used help. All they got was scorn and laughter.

It is easy to understand the reasons for the present Tucholsky renaissance among the New Left in West Germany today.

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WHAT CONCERNS ME IN THIS CONTEXT is not so much the view of the *Weltbühne* circle and their judgment of the political situation. I happen to believe that it was, to say the least, grossly oversimplified. But even if their appraisal had been correct, if German democracy was a sham in 1929, if fascism to all intents and purposes had already prevailed, the publication of books like *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* would still not have served any useful purpose. This is not to say that a man or a group of men should not stand up for their convictions however radical, and however dangerous the consequences. But Tucholsky and his friends should have at least understood what dilemma they were facing. They could have argued that as Europeans and humanists, as socialists and pacifists, they had a sacred duty to resist the rising wave of chauvinism. Since they lived in Germany and wrote in German they considered they had a right to have their say on Germany's future and to be listened to with respect. Unfortunately, this is not how most other Germans saw it. Since they were Jews their position in German politics and society was shaky anyway—and a man like Tucholsky remained a Jew even if baptised seven times over. By making no effort whatsoever to differentiate between patriotism and maniacal chauvinism, between legitimate or normal national interests and aggressive revanchist politics they finally disqualified themselves even in the eyes of their friends on the Left, socialists and Communists alike. If Tucholsky was convinced that there was no longer any hope, that the corruption had proceeded too far, what indeed was the point of carrying on the struggle? These were not insensitive men but they had no real roots themselves and, therefore, they lacked the sensorium for the patriotic feeling of their fellow-citizens. They were incapable of understanding anyone who reacted differently from the way they did.

MORITZ GOLDSTEIN, who wrote that controversial and prophetic article before the first World War, emigrated to the United States when Hitler came to power. On one occasion, in his old age, he again wrote about the affair and commented on its implications. Comparing the German and the American situation, he dwelt upon the heavy concentration of American Jews in all branches of literature, the theatre, films, music, etc. But he also noted the profound differences. The European concept of culture was not fully valid on the other side of the Atlantic; there was no talk about that semi-mystical entity called *Volksseele*, the inner mind of the nation. There was no fear that the mind of the nation would be polluted by any foreign admixture. On the contrary, America was the classical country of immigrants; everyone was equal, and belonged to the nation; every divisive trend was disparaged, and considered unpatriotic. "Anti-semitic utterances in private or public seem to be unknown," Goldstein wrote. No opposition had been voiced against the participation of Jews in cultural activities. But, he added almost as an afterthought, the day may come when the Americans, too, will be concerned about the true mind of their nation, and then the question will be raised whether American Jews are Americans or strangers.

Mr. Goldstein's second article was written in 1956; when he said "the day may come" he meant "in a hundred or even two hundred years hence." Events during the last decade have moved faster than he anticipated. There has been something of a problem all along, and it has become more acute in recent years. In some American circles the Tucholsky Syndrome has been rapidly spreading. (Perhaps I am doing an injustice to the late star of the *Weltbühne*; in comparison with the author of *Macbird* he was, of course, a giant.) A radical force has come into being even more emphatic in its rejection of America, its way of life and the aspirations of most of its citizens than the opposition of the writers of the *Weltbühne* to the Weimar Republic. Its more extreme members are firmly

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convinced that fascism has already prevailed, that American prisons are worse than Nazi concentration camps, that American policemen are more vicious than the *Gestapo*. There are countless publications which take up with a vengeance the theme of *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* opposing not just American policy at home and abroad but deriding patriotism, the national symbols, traditional values, venerable traditions. Many leaders of the movement and a high percentage of their followers are of Jewish origin. Everyone knows it, though it is still not often mentioned in public. The majority of American Jews has not much sympathy with the movement. But this is of no great consequence. As in Germany in the Weimar period what matters are those who are in the limelight; it is Mark Rudd and not the Hassidic rabbis of Brooklyn who determines the public image.

JEWISH INTELLECTUALS are drawn towards the camp of progress and social justice in politics following an old and honourable tradition. They feel (to quote an early forerunner, the German radical democrat Johan Jacoby) every folly and every misery of mankind as if they were personally affected. Those with a particular Western European background have realised more acutely than others the great dangers of Nationalism. It is, perhaps, not without relevance in this context that in Israel too the movement for an Arab-Jewish *rapprochement* from the very beginning has been largely constituted by Jews from Germany and the United States. But by this very same tradition they have had (with the exception of the Zionists), no feelings for the importance of the national element. Having been for so long in their history a people without a state and a homeland, total rejection has always come much easier to some of them than to most of their fellow citizens.

I hope I shall not be reminded that present-day America is in a hundred ways different from Weimar Germany and that history never exactly repeats itself. This, of course, goes without saying. But it is equally true that there are certain recurring patterns in Jewish as in general history. The issues are complex, and a discussion of their many aspects leads one beyond the confines of a brief article. I do not want to carry my argument beyond this point and to speculate about the future place of American Jews in the cultural life or the radical movement of their couuntry.

But there is reason for concern: problems of this character are not usually resolved by turning a blind eye.

Blimps with Little Red Flags

By Peter Fryer

IN 1937 a British communist wrote an unofficial history of his party, and it was attacked by a fellow-communist with such ferocity that an apology had to be made; the book, by Tom Bell, was nevertheless repudiated by the party's Secretariat. Its critic, Allen Hutt, had held that "a strong case can be made out against the conception of a *separate* History of the Communist Party at this stage." Three decades later, the British communists have at last plucked up courage to examine their own history.[1] To be sure, only the first seven years are dealt with in these first two volumes—and even their promised successor will "probably" not carry the story beyond 1932. Nor does the examination pretend to be objective or, save in quite superficial respects, critical. It is, however, official. And the choice of James Klugmann as Official Historian tells us much about the party's present frame of mind, its attitude to its past, and its hopes for the future.

Klugmann's previous attempt at communist

PETER FRYER *was in Hungary as a correspondent for the Communist* Daily Worker *when the 1956 uprising broke out, and his brief book on those events was a remarkable document. He has since published "The Birth Controllers" (1965, Secker & Warburg) and "Private Case: Public Scandal" (1966). His most recent article in* ENCOUNTER *was "A Map of the Underground" (October 1967).*

[1] James Klugmann, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, vol. I: Formation and Early Years, 1919–1924; vol. II: 1925–1927: The General Strike. (Lawrence & Wishart, 63s., 70s.)

Allen Hutt, "How Not to Write Communist History," *Labour Monthly*, XIX (1937), p. 382, reviewing Tom Bell, *The British Communist Party: a Short History* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1937). For statements by the Editorial Board ("the tone of this review was far too sharp and personal") and C.P. Secretariat ("this book should not be considered as a history of the Party"), see *Labour Monthly*, XIX (1937), p. 453.

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historiography has itself a sad history. Entitled *From Trotsky to Tito*, and published in 1951, it accused Tito and his colleagues of learning their tactics "from Hitler and Goebbels."[2] In 1956, following the Soviet-Yugoslav *rapprochement* and the Khrushchev revelations, this book was withdrawn. Its author has never ventured publicly to explain how he came to write it, or to subject it to any kind of self-critical examination, or to draw any lessons from having allowed himself to be so grievously misled by fabricated evidence. But he does seem to have learnt one thing. Throughout the first volume of his new history there is no mention of Trotsky, who was one of the most prominent leaders of the international communist movement in those early years (and whose informed interest in British politics was to be shown in his *Where Is Britain Going?*, written early in 1925). And the second volume dismisses the *C.P.G.B.*'s early encounter with "Trotskyism" in just one page. No doubt it is better to play safe than be sorry a second time.

If Klugmann's new book, unlike his earlier one, has no villain, it certainly does not lack a hero. The hagiography is a shade subtler than it used to be when personality cults were unbridled. Nevertheless, a young Lancashire boilermaker, not yet thirty years of age when the Communist Party of Great Britain was founded, is here credited with a degree of political wisdom and initiative that would have been remarkable in one twice his years. Almost single-handed, it appears, he carried through the party's reorganisation from an uneasy conflation of propagandist sects into a democratic-centralist proletarian vanguard, with "fractions," "nuclei," and "Party training" (and with an elaborate apparatus of Political Bureau, Organising Bureau, and Secretariat to run a party of a few thousand members)—a process known at the time, though Klugmann coyly conceals the fact in the first volume and is understandably apologetic about it in the second, as *"Bolshevization."* This young man alone, if Klugmann is to be believed, was immune from political error. Glancing neither to Right nor "Left," flirting with neither opportunism nor sectarianism, he "personally" stopped the *Jolly George*, carrying munitions for use against Soviet Russia, in 1919; corrected the sectarian approach of the British Bureau of the Red International of Labour Unions (*Profintern*) in 1921; and edited the party's first daily newspaper in 1922.[3] It was he, not J. R. Campbell, who wrote the "Open Letter to the Fighting Forces" that sparked off the famous "Campbell case" in 1924.

This paragon was Harry Pollitt, and one would hardly guess from Klugmann's account that he was not from the outset the party's "leader," as it later became mandatory to style him. Even when Klugmann records the setting up of a Central Women's Department at the party Centre, he finds it necessary to add a solemn footnote: "With Harry Pollitt as one of its members" (I, p. 338, n. 5). By comparison, the party's secretary during most of the period covered, Albert Inkpin, emerges as a shadowy and colourless figure; and it will be interesting to see how Klugmann and his collaborator in the promised third volume, Jack Cohen, deal with Pollitt's eventual appointment as general secretary, as late as 1929, on Moscow's insistence and against the wishes of a large number of members.

KLUGMANN WRITES in the emphatic, repetitive, itemising style so familiar to those who have ever sat at his unstraying feet during one of his lectures, with their headings, sub-headings, and sub-sub-headings neatly ticked off on his fingers. Whole chunks of those lecture notes,

[2] James Klugmann, *From Trotsky to Tito* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1951), p. 157.

[3] This was the short-lived *Daily Communist* (Glasgow), the date of whose first issue Klugmann gives variously as 11 November 1922 (I, p. 189, n. 4) and 10 November (I, p. 218).

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key words underlined, are here transcribed, *mutatis non mutandis*, with such results as these:

> Of those who, on the surface, *were* convinced, *some* still saw such participation as a purely *negative* act. . . . Nor did they see how the *combined* struggle, inside and outside, *could* win concrete gains . . . (I, p. 195).
>
> It showed what *could* be achieved by a *united* working class ready to *fight* for its demands by *militant* action, including the *strike* weapon on *political* as well as *economic* issues (I, p. 87).
>
> It was necessary . . . to win *support* for the colonial peoples' struggles, to see that this was a *common* struggle that *equally* concerned British workers and colonial peoples, . . . and to call for an *equal fraternal* struggle of comrades facing a common enemy and to give, where possible, *direct* support to the struggles of the the colonial people (II, p. 293).

Such a style might be tolerable if one could rely on Klugmann's accuracy. But he is unsure even of the date on which his party was born. On page 167 of the first volume we read:

> The C.P.G.B. was formed on August 1, 1920. From August 2 it became the major target of hatred, slander, attack of the capitalist class and its propaganda machine.

Sixty pages later, this becomes:

> The Communist Party of Great Britain was founded on July 31, 1920. From August 1, 1920, it has been the most attacked, slandered, smeared organisation from the side of the British capitalist press (I, p. 229).

Again, slips of this sort might not matter overmuch if one could be sure of Klugmann's desire to find out the truth and tell it to his readers. Unfortunately, he is evasive, not to say slippery, precisely on those points where his party's critics are eager to have the benefit of his researches in those "seldom-examined archives" the blurb alludes to. In particular, he is evasive about his party's relations with the Communist International, and about the closely connected question of the party's internal disputes. The Comintern is here castrated. Orders from Moscow? Instructions? Intervention? One can see Klugmann's sad smile as, half melancholy and half amused at the critics' cynicism, he portrays the Comintern and its Russian masters and paymasters as a rather jolly, helpful bunch, who had the true interests of the British workers at heart. When, that is, he bothers to mention the Comintern at all.

The names of its leading members, apart from Lenin, cannot for the most part be given, since they later perished in Stalin's purges or were otherwise disposed of, and their present status is doubtful. Thus we are told that "many of the leading Soviet revolutionaries of the day" (I, pp. 216–17) wrote for the party's monthly journal, *Communist Review*; but we are not told who they were.[4] It is unlucky for Krugmann that the "Zinoviev letter" affair forces him to name the still unluckier Zinoviev—though even then he cannot bring himself to admit that Zinoviev was at that time president of the Comintern Executive. Klugmann's otherwise very detailed account of the party reorganisation in 1922–23 makes no reference to the Comintern Commission, appointed to investigate the British C.P.; nor to the Commission's failure to arrive in Britain; nor to a certain Comrade Peet's successful trip to the Continent to "seek out the commission" and bring it home with him; nor to its subsequent "exhaustive inquiries into the whole of the party's affairs"; nor to the special meeting of the Comintern Executive, held in Moscow in February 1922 to discuss the British party's problems, attended by its chairman Arthur MacManus (whose ashes rest in the Kremlin wall).[5]

Klugmann claims that the change of leadership "in 1922," "far from being . . . the imposition by the Communist International of a new leadership on the British Party, was much rather the reverse" (I, p. 212). (If this means anything at all, it means that the British party imposed a new leadership on the Comintern: a novel suggestion.) But what about the change in the summer of 1923, not 1922, when the British party's entire Central Committee set sail for Moscow to confer with the Comintern for the best part of a month? Did not the Central Committee's organisational report to the next party congress (Manchester, May 1924) speak of changes "*insisted upon* by the Presidium of the Comintern"?[6] (According to Klugmann (II,

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[4] From its first issue (May 1921) to the end of 1924, the *Communist Review* ran five articles by Zinoviev, four by Trotsky, three each by Bukharin and Radek, and one by Stalin.

[5] *Report of the Executive Committee of the C.P.G.B.* (1922), as quoted by L. J. Macfarlane, *The British Communist Party: its Origin and Development until 1929* (MacGibbon & Kee, 1966), p. 75. Macfarlane's useful account should be supplemented, for the period 1920–26, by two articles of "Joseph Redman" (Brian Pearce): "British Communist History," *Labour Review*, II (1957), pp. 106–10; "The Early Years of the CPGB," *Labour Review*, III (1958), pp. 11–22.

[6] *Speeches & Documents of the Sixth (Manchester) Conference of the Communist Party of Great Britain* (1924), p. 51. The changes *"insisted upon"* (my italics—P.F.) included the reorganisation of the Political Bureau, with Pollitt and William Gallacher replacing J. T. Murphy and Bob Stewart, and the addition of Arthur Horner and Wal Hannington as full members and J. R. Campbell and J. Walton Newbold as substitute members.

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p. 349), the Comintern Executive did not have a Presidium to do any insisting; this is an outrageous error.) Only one passing and exceedingly uninformative reference is made to the role of the official Comintern representatives in Britain, Michael Borodin ("George Brown") and D. Petrovsky ("A. J. Bennet"), and they are not named.[7] Not least, no reference whatever is made to the British party leaders' sudden decision, in the summer of 1924, to oppose "Trotskyism": a decision taken without the membership being consulted, after the Central Committee had heard a report from Petrovsky on the controversy in the Russian party,[8] and only four months after the party's journals had been presenting Trotsky's case with scrupulous fairness. So when Klugmann, towards the end of the second volume, at last brings himself to record the British party's anti-Trotsky resolutions of November 1924, May–June 1925, and August 1926—the discussions within the Russian C.P. and the Comintern having been mysteriously "brought to the attention of the British Party" (II, p. 327)—he writes, misleadingly, as if this had been the start of the struggle against "Trotskyism" in Britain. No mention of Petrovsky's report. No mention of the way the party Executive condemned Trotsky's *The Lessons of October* (1924) without having read more than a summary of it—or the way the inimitable Andrew Rothstein told those who objected to this hasty decision that "they have a terrible deal to learn yet before they become real Communists." No mention of Rothstein's reference to Lenin's so-called "Testament" as "a gross forgery," or of R. Page Arnot's statement that the Trotsky opposition in Russia was confined to a few students and of no interest to the Russian workers.[9]

ONE NEED NOT AGREE with all or even part of Trotsky's early critique of Stalinism to object to Klugmann's account of how it was received in the British party. The point is not who proved right in the controversy but how the British leaders handled it. They swallowed, or pretended to swallow, everything the Russian leaders told them. They passed virtually overnight from fulsome praise of Trotsky to wholesale condemnation, and they did so before enough evidence was available to enable any responsible student of politics to make up his mind. Here we have the earliest example of Stalinist methods inside the British C.P. There are of course countless later examples, many of which are still more shameful and, no doubt, of more pressing current importance. But here was how it began. Here was the first occasion on which Moscow took snuff and the British leaders obediently sneezed. It is obviously of the greatest interest to students of British working-class history to examine this first example in some detail. But Klugmann conceals so much and distorts so much that his book, on this as on so many other aspects of his subject, is practically valueless to the serious student.

Thus he dismisses Trotsky's article on "Problems of the British Labour Movement," published in the *Communist International* magazine in 1926, as presenting "a picture of a helpless Communist Party" and containing "an acutely sectarian approach to the Left in the Labour Movement" (II, p. 327, n. 5)—

[7] Petrovsky's British wife, Rose Cohen, disappeared in Moscow during the '30s. I cannot say whether the British party leaders tried, then or subsequently, to find out what happened to her or what she was accused of. According to a prominent woman member of the C.P., "she must have opened her big mouth too wide. . . ."

[8] Cf. *Workers' Weekly*, 6 June 1924.

[9] *Workers' Weekly*, 23 January 1925. These statements were made at the celebrated London "aggregate" (general membership meeting) of 17 January 1925, where an amendment regretting the Party leaders' hasty vote against Trotsky was defeated by a considerable majority. This not unimportant meeting is dealt with by Klugmann in forty words.

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LONGMANS

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though no less an authority than R. Palme Dutt was to repeat Trotsky's criticisms at length, if without acknowledgment, in the September 1926 *Labour Monthly*, though similar criticisms of the "Left" group on the T.U.C. General Council were contained in the Comintern's June 1926 "Theses on the British General Strike," and though Trotsky's "sectarian approach" was as the cooing of doves compared with the "social-fascist" terminology to be adopted by the C.P. from 1929 to 1933.

ONE CAN SYMPATHISE with the Official Historian. If he were to devote more than a page to the Trotsky controversy, he could hardly avoid retailing some highly embarrassing stories. Here is one that has escaped his net. Trotsky's *Lenin* (Eng. translation, 1925) was condemned in the *Labour Monthly* as "the book of a sick and neurotic man ... as pathetic a book as was ever unwisely given to the world," and in the *Communist Review* as "a complete failure"—whereupon J. F. Horrabin pointed out that the only section of the book yet published in the British press had been featured as the star item in the previous July's *Labour Monthly*, edited by Dutt, "but that was before the Party ukase against Trotsky had gone forth; so that, presumably, its poor quality was not apparent to faithful Communists at that time." Horrabin went on to remark that "some folks—on certain subjects—do their thinking to order."[10]

How a historian of British communism treats the Trotsky controversy of the 1920s is a touchstone of his integrity. Klugmann's page on this topic falls below the standard, low as it is, of the rest of his book.

AS FOR DOMESTIC DISPUTES, Klugmann omits them whenever he can; and when he cannot, he glosses over them by choosing the less outspoken contributions to controversies and parading these as if he had done all that scholarship requires. For example, he refers in a footnote (I, p. 325) to criticisms of the leadership made by A. Hawkins and E. W. Cant early in 1924, but omits J. T. Murphy's complaint about the lack of discussion in the party and T. A. Jackson's still more trenchant and prescient words:

> Is an ignorant membership necessary to the working of the plan of organisation ... ? ... Our job is only to carry out all instructions at the double, and stand to attention until the next order comes. ... This ... is ... the sort of Party that seems to be desired by many who have had a hand in the process of re-organisation during the past 16 months.[11]

And that, of course, was the sort of party they got: a party of yes-men, doing their thinking to order, rubber-stamping the decisions of whoever happened to be in power in the Kremlin with such alacrity that, by 1926, Thaelmann could note (*Inprecorr*, 17 March 1926) that it was the one major party that had no differences with the Comintern Executive, while Stalin himself could praise it as "one of the best sections of the Communist International."[12]

IN HIS SECOND VOLUME, Klugmann's main concern is to glorify the British Communist Party's contribution to the 1926 General Strike. His chapter on this topic runs, with appendices, to 140 pages. He admits there were weaknesses in the party's political appeals and statements during the Strike, but he finds them *"overwhelmingly correct."* As for its practical activity, that was nothing short of "magnificent" (II, p. 193).

Validating this claim causes the Official Historian some embarrassment. He has to show that the communists were the most active, energetic, courageous, self-sacrificing, and altogether magnificent members of the various local committees that sprang up during the Strike. But he has to do so without offending non-communist readers, who may be aware that a certain number of non-communists also organised, picketed, and got themselves arrested and sent to prison. So he hops gingerly from one foot to another. On the one hand, "the Communist Party had pioneered the campaign for many of the forms of action which became essential parts of the activity of the most effective strike committees and Councils of Action." On the other hand, "no one should attempt to paint the tremendous apparatus of strike committees and Councils of Action ... as the monopoly of the Communists." On the one hand, "Communists were everywhere in the most active mass pickets, editing and distributing bulletins, manning key positions in the strike committees and Councils

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[10] W. N. Ewer, *Labour Monthly*, VII (1925), p. 250. Arthur MacManus, *Communist Review*, VI (1925–26), p. 47. *The Plebs*, XVII (1925), p. 214.

[11] *Communist Review*, IV (1923–24), p. 539. Tommy Jackson, a formidable theoretician, lecturer, and activist of the period, is virtually ignored in Klugmann's book. One looks in vain, for instance, in the accounts of the party's unsuccessful applications for affiliation to the Labour Party, for Jackson's often-quoted words about taking the Labour Party leaders by the hand "as a preliminary to taking them by the throat!" (*The Communist*, 25 March 1922, p. 8).

[12] J. V. Stalin, *Works*, vol. VIII (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), p. 173.

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of Action," and "Communist Party members were initiators, organisers, activists" on "many of the best" of the Councils of Action in London. On the other hand, "thousands and tens of thousands of non-Communist miners and other militant trade unionists, I.L.P.'ers, members of Constituency Labour Parties, helped to form and man the Councils of Action."[13]

Klugmann resolves his dilemma, as best he can, by calling for "much more research to pin down the specific positions held by Communist Party members . . . in each particular committee." But this concession to scholarship does not satisfy the party patriot; despite the lack of research, the C.P.'s "vanguard" role has to be asserted:

> Though much more research still needs to be carried out, it would seem that in very many of the Councils of Action which were most militant and most effective in their activity . . . Communists participated, often in leading positions (II, p. 149).

"Would seem"—"very many"—"often"—such woolliness demonstrates that Klugmann simply does not know the relative contributions made by members of various working-class parties to rank-and-file activity in the 1926 Strike. Where he is able to give statistics, the C.P. contribution is seen to have been somewhat less than superhuman. The Lanarkshire Council of Action had a communist chairman and seven other communists amongst its 40 members. In Battersea there were ten communists on a Council of Action of 124 and four on the executive of seven. In Stepney there were four communists on a Council of fifteen. And so forth. Klugmann estimates that over 1,000 communists were arrested during the strike; two in five of those arrested, in other words, were C.P. members.

It would be idle to deny that British communists worked very hard and made many sacrifices during the General Strike. But this is not the essential point Klugmann is making. He is seeking to show that the communists were, as a body, politically wiser than any other organisation. For his account to carry conviction, he has to omit the large amount of evidence that the party as a whole "failed to play the role in the General Strike which most people, friends and foes alike, had expected it would play."[14] The first detailed C.P. analysis of the strike, by J. T. Murphy (soon to be expelled), recognised that its start had caught the Party by surprise. According to Laski, writing a few months after the Strike, "the communists played practically no part at all." On the Strike's seventh day (10 May 1926), Hamilton Fyfe wrote in his diary: "The Communists have . . . kept very quiet. . . . They have sunk out of sight."[15]

A few months after the Strike, E. H. Brown, a member of the Party Executive, admitted that "our factory groups were weak and did not function properly during the General Strike," while "in some districts the groups stopped functioning altogether."[16] George Hardy, another leading communist, declares in his memoirs that "the Councils of Action, with a few exceptions, functioned only in a limited way." P. Braun, a Comintern functionary, ad-

[13] Cf. II, pp. 190–1: "The tens of thousands of 'unknown soldiers' of the class war who . . . manned the pickets, led the Councils of Action, printed and distributed the bulletins, were members of the Labour Party, of the I.L.P., non-party trade unionists, as well as Communists." Pruning the Official History of such repetitions would, I estimate, have reduced its length by some 25 per cent.

[14] "Joseph Redman" (Brian Pearce), *Labour Review*, III (1958), pp. 11–12. I am indebted to this article for several of the quotations which follow.

[15] J. T. Murphy, *The Political Meaning of the Great Strike* (1926), p. 80. Harold J. Laski, *Communism* (1927), p. 195. Hamilton Fyfe, *Behind the Scenes of the Great Strike* (1926), pp. 68–9.

[16] As quoted by O. Piatnitsky, *Communist International*, IV (1927), p. 175.

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mitted that the party had not believed in the possibility of the General Council's calling off the struggle; the party, he added, "did not do all it should have done to warn the workers against betrayal and to make betrayal impossible." And Murphy wrote in 1934 that the party "tried unavailingly to stem the return to work," but "held *no* decisive positions" which would have made that possible.[17]

All this Klugmann ignores, for he is interested in perpetuating a legend, not in establishing the facts.

BY THE SLY IRONY of history, Klugmann's first volume appeared a few weeks after the British communists and their daily paper, greatly daring and not without anguish and internal opposition, broke with the Comintern tradition of unquestioning acceptance of every Soviet word, thought, and deed. The invasion of Czechoslovakia was too much for even them to stomach; and those members and ex-members who thirteen years ago were calling for a more independent stance have had the pleasure of seeing *Pravda*'s London correspondent chiding the *Morning Star* for its pro-Czechoslovak coverage and its doubts about the impartiality of Soviet journalists (*The Times*, 17 Sept. 1968). The British Communist Party has evidently changed since 1956. It has changed still more since 1920.

What is left today of the revolutionary doctrine and revolutionary enthusiasm of those 3,000 or so members of the British Socialist Party, the Socialist Labour Party, and the other groups and grouplets that gathered under the Comintern banner? How much in its present-day language and activities would they recognise, those stalwarts, a third of them unemployed, who were prepared to work for their party for thirty bob a week, who took arrest and imprisonment in their stride, who regarded Lenin's Russia as a beacon of hope for suffering humanity? Precious little, is the answer. Of the "three fundamental principles" on which the groups amalgamated, one, the dictatorship of the proletariat, was long ago silently omitted from the party programme. Another, "soviets" as organs of working-class struggle and power, was likewise repudiated long ago.[18] The third principle, affiliation to the Communist International, was formally abandoned in 1943, when the moribund Comintern apparatus was finally wound up. But only a political innocent would deny that the Comintern tradition of finding out what the Russian comrades wanted doing, doing it at the double, and standing to attention till the next order came, died hard at No. 16, King Street.

Now that this principle, too, has finally been abandoned, in practice as well as theory, it is difficult to see what role remains for the British Communist Party. No longer a revolutionary organisation, no longer the local apologist for the Socialist Sixth of the World, overtaken on the Left by youthful militancy, regarded by politically aware young people as a joke, unable to face its past record with any degree of honesty, dolefully contemplating a future in which it could easily follow the *I.L.P.* into oblivion—why on earth should it not wipe the slate clean by dissolving itself? This is the logic of its backing Czechoslovakia against the Soviet Union. Klugmann's book is clearly part of yet another effort to rally the ranks, furbish the party's image—primarily amongst its own members—and show how essential the *C.P.G.B.* was, is, and always will be.

FOR THE OFFICIAL HISTORIAN is not so much concerned with history as with current politics. His history is basically a running polemic against his party's present-day critics. His insistence that the party "was not in any sense a foreign creation" is the key phrase in his first two volumes. This is the thesis he sustains for over 700 pages; but he can sustain it only by telling half the story. It is true enough, so far as it goes, that the *C.P.G.B.* was home-grown, in the sense that it developed out of existing organisations in this country; but to state this without qualification is to sidestep the Comintern's derailing of a whole generation of revolutionary socialists in Britain. So the Comintern is systematically played down. We are given *Hamlet* without the King and Queen and Prince.

Thanks to the Comintern, international solidarity was twisted into bureaucratic docility; revolutionary zeal was transformed into a sort of Left-wing Blimpishness; and Marxism was reduced to a set of formulas learnt by rote. This process began in the period Klugmann covers, and it is his aim to conceal its beginnings from his readers. That he fails, despite all the omissions and evasions, is the sole redeeming feature of these impudent volumes.

[17] George Hardy, *Those Stormy Years* (1956), p. 188. *Labour Monthly*, IX (1927), pp. 25–6. J. T. Murphy, *Preparing for Power* (1934), p. 235.

[18] In *The British Road to Socialism* (1951), a document which held it slanderous to suggest that the party aimed at setting up "soviets" in Britain. The party's 1935 programme had been entitled *For Soviet Britain!*, but this did not prevent Stalin's personally insisting—as I was informed in 1956 by a then member of the C.P.'s Political Committee—on the insertion of this oblique repudiation into the draft of the 1951 programme.

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

On Hobbits & Intellectuals

By Donald Davie

"PAROCHIAL POLEMIC"—ENCOUNTER'S *R* and Mr. Kingsley Amis, snapping and snarling at each other in recent issues, agree in being deprecating about it. And they are so right. For this particular mixture of bitchiness and deprecation is a British hall mark; and it's this, the tone of their exchanges not the substance of them, which shows most clearly how it's all in the family, indeed only a quarrel at the parish-pump. They both "like it here"; and their liking it so well is what makes their disagreements only shadow-play, however much they huff and bitch at each other. Until Amis' anger or irritation gets to the point where he'll at least consider getting the hell out, no one can take his polemic against "the Lefties" much more seriously than *R* does, who thinks that liking it here is all you have to do to be a patriot.

I don't like it here, and yet consider myself for all that as good a patriot as *R* or Amis—perhaps a better. It may be that one way to stop being parochial about England is to start being egocentric about it. At any rate, it's worth a try—if one is a patriot, it is.

I qualify to join in because I detect in myself much the same drift to the Right that Amis admits to, and I don't apologise for it any more than he does. I am my own favourite author, and often when I seem to be studying another writer, it's myself I'm studying really. A poem of mine that has been puzzling me lately is one that I wrote in 1953, called "Creon's Mouse":

Creon, I think, could never kill a mouse
When once that dangerous girl was put away,
Shut up unbridled in her rocky house,
Colossal nerve denied the light of day.

Now Europe's hero, the humaner King
Who hates himself, is humanised by shame,
Is he a curbed or a corroded spring?
A will that's bent, or buckled? Tense, or tame?

If too much daring brought (he thought) the war,
When that was over nothing else would serve
But no one must be daring any more,
A self-induced and stubborn loss of nerve....

This poem was seriously meant, and much of it I still subscribe to. A loss of nerve is what has saved us time and again in the years since 1953. It was what averted world war over Budapest in 1956, as also this last summer over Prague, in which latest case it was in fact, and rightly, taken for granted. On the other side of the balance, an alarming recovery of nerve, "too much daring," was what took us into the Suez crisis and took America into Viet Nam. But I ask myself now, as apparently I didn't in 1953, "How much daring is too much?" What I didn't envisage then, which there is no excuse for not envisaging now, is that there would be people who would think it too daring of Creon to be a king at all, however self-limited and vowed to consultation and compromise. It is possible, I now realise, to think that it is audacious presumption for a man to get into any position of authority over his fellows, to take on any kind of institutionalised responsibility for directing them.

No one seriously believes this? On the contrary, John Rowley, writing to *The Listener* (24 October) about "End of the Anti-University," declared that that venture ran aground on precisely this rock. "But you need," said Mr. Rowley (expostulating, I take it, with his ex-colleagues),

> a "place" and an "organisation" within it, however small and flexible, that is recognisable by all. Nobody seemed to be able to accept this. It meant an organisation and that meant "power," which was anathema.

Even then, he said, the Anti-University might be saved if "some reluctant capitalist" would write a cheque; but this was impossible because "we are unable to tell him who to send it to." The difficulty, one would have thought, could have been foreseen. But apparently not. The Anti-University was full of Antigones, not a Creon among them; and no one would take, or could be given, the authority to receive a cheque on behalf of the rest. For that would have been to acknowledge that the Anti-University had been instituted and was therefore (insupportable word) an institution. When people behave like this, Creon's nerve has been buckled indeed.

I HAVE NEVER HAD enough patience with Antigone, and Sophocles' play has never been in focus for me. This is where I go most strongly along with Kingsley Amis, despite differing from him violently about Viet Nam and the alleged monolith of Communism, and about much else. For what Amis calls "Lefties" I call Antigones. And the connection has occured to

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others; for instance, to Conor Cruise O'Brien, writing in the same issue of *The Listener* where John Rowley's letter appeared. O'Brien reminds us that Antigone had a sister, Ismene, who resented Creon's order but would not flout it:

> There are many, even among the victims of the present conditions, who feel that the price of change would be too high: the spiritual children of Ismene are more numerous than those of Antigone, in Ulster as elsewhere. And their arguments, as always, are reasonable. The disabilities of Catholics in Northern Ireland are real, but not overwhelmingly oppressive: is their removal really worth attaining at the risk of precipitating riots, explosions, pogroms, murder? Thus Ismene. But Antigone will not heed such calculations: she is an ethical and religious force, an uncompromising element in our being, as dangerous in her way as Creon, whom she perpetually challenges and provokes.

I've always been pro-Ismene myself, ever since I first read the play. Amis, I think, isn't; he's a Creon man. I've always thought Ismene had more reason to lose patience with Antigone than ever Creon had, though neither Sophocles nor his commentators seem to have thought so. Creon and Antigone understand each other pretty well, they have a good deal in common, more than either of them has with unheroic, painfully reasonable Ismene. So it's no surprise if Amis has played Antigone in his time. As he did, I think, in a poem of his called "Masters," which he must have written about the same time as my "Creon's Mouse":

That horse whose rider fears to jump will fall,
Riflemen miss if orders sound unsure;
They only are secure who seem secure;
Who lose their voice, lose all.

Those whom heredity or guns have made
Masters, must show it by a common speech;
Expected words in the same tone from each
Will always be obeyed.

Likewise with stance, with gestures, and with face;
No more than mouth need move when words are said,
No more than hand to strike, or point ahead;
Like slaves, limbs learn their place.

In triumph as in mutiny unmoved,
These make their public act their private good,
Their words in lounge or courtroom understood,
But themselves never loved.

The eyes that will not look, the twitching cheek,
The hands that sketch what mouth would fear to own,
These only make us known, and we are known
Only as we are weak:
By yielding mastery the will is freed,
For it is by surrender that we live,
And we are taken if we wish to give,
Are needed if we need.

I think this is an enviably well-written poem until the last stanza where the cadence smooths itself out with disconcerting slickness. And not just the cadence, surely. For what follows if we take the argument seriously and try to follow it through? Surely one thing that might follow, one moral we might draw, is to act like Mr. Rowley's Anti-University colleagues. For if the only way to be known and loved is not to act or speak with authority, then shouldn't we at all costs refuse authority and neither sign nor receive cheques on anyone's behalf? Always be in the Opposition, never in the Government. Always refuse office. There is nothing else that Antigone can do, if she is going to remain Antigone.

The interesting thing about Amis' poem is that his Antigone refuses above all the supposed loneliness of office. In Sophocles' play Antigone is the intransigent individualist, a loner. But the Antigones that tangle with the police on or off campus, or in the streets of Derry and London, are always in the plural, and think of themselves thus, as the speaker of "Masters" does. The price that our Antigones won't pay in order to take authority is the price of detachment from the collective. Of course, mass-action is the only weapon they have. But their slogans and rallying cries, and their cooler statements also, make it clear that for most of them identification with the mass isn't just a strategic necessity but an emotional need, as witness their remarkable jumpiness about allegations of a personality cult surrounding Tariq Ali or Daniel Cohn-Bendit or any other "leader." Sophocles' Antigone could not be a social democrat; our Antigones are.

O'Brien insists that Creon and Antigone and Ismene are universal types, or at least that the Creon-stance, the Antigone-stance, the Ismene-stance are constants of political action, in any place at any time. Doubtless this is right. Nikita Creon loses his nerve in the Cuban missile crisis, as Uncle Sam Creon loses his nerve over Budapest in 1956, as alas he doesn't lose it over Viet Nam. But when we think that Russian Antigones are called Larisa Daniel and Pavel Litvinov, we are forced to remember how circumstances alter cases. There is nothing disingenuous nor hypocritical about admiring the Antigone-stance in certain situations and in certain societies, while deploring it in others. If Communism is not monolithic, neither is "protest." And, to take another instance, we've seen

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how irrelevant Ismene's stance of pained reasonableness can be, in one state after another of emergent Africa. So the British Antigone can be seen and judged only if we separate her from Antigones elsewhere; she belongs and is to be understood only in the context of British society. Even *R*, who jeers that "the Lefty" is a phantom, "at work everywhere, like a Jew out of the Protocols of Zion," doesn't really think that Amis sees him anywhere but in Britain.

Amis describes "the Lefty" in one of his best poems, "After Goliath," which one can think of as "After Creon." David, having laid the giant out cold, exults briefly over Goliath's adherents:

> *Aldermen, adjutants, aunts,*
> *Administrators of grants,*
> *Assurance-men, auctioneers,*
> *Advisers about careers,*

—all Creon-types, of the sorts hilariously pilloried in *Lucky Jim* and *That Uncertain Feeling*. Lucky Dave then pauses:

> *But such an auspicious debut*
> *Was a little too good to be true,*
> *Our victor sensed; the applause*
> *From those who supported his cause*
> *Sounded shrill and excessive now,*
> *And who were they, anyhow?*
> *Academics, actors who lecture,*
> *Apostles of architecture,*
> *Ancient-gods-of-the-abdomen men,*
> *Angst-pushers, adherents of Zen,*
> *Alastors, Austenites, A-test*
> *Abolishers—even the straightest*
> *Of issues looks pretty oblique*
> *When a movement turns into a clique,*
> *The conqueror mused, as he stopped*
> *By the sword his opponent had dropped:*
> *Trophy, or means of attack*
> *On the rapturous crowd at his back?...*

And in the years since, we have seen how Amis the giant-killer settled that last question: the weapon of his fame, wrenched from the giant Establishment, has been turned on those who most applauded that assault. A sword taken from Creon has been used against Antigone. And, allowing for the comic-dramatic convention of the poem (the catalogue gets more vehement and more random as David's exasperation mounts), it is plain who Amis' Antigone is: she is the British intelligentsia. If he calls her "Lefty," this is because the British intelligentsia has virtually no right wing at all, except for Amis himself and one or two others like Robert Conquest and Peregrine Worsthorne; the British intelligentsia is a left-wing intelligentsia. Any talk of the Labour Party or the Conservative Party only muddles the issue, and it is an issue too important to be muddled; nothing less than What is an intelligentsia? or what has it come to be in British society? What are the social privileges and obligations of an intelligentsia, and are these the privileges it enjoys, and the obligations it honours, in Britain today?

BUT SOME PEOPLE think we haven't got an intelligentsia at all. In a B.B.C. broadcast Graham Hough was saying that England has never had an intelligentsia, and hasn't needed one, but that it needs one now. Reading this in the University of Essex, less than 50 miles from Hough's Cambridge, I couldn't believe my eyes. At Essex I had seen university teachers very ready, in Hough's words,

> to abandon the status of Arnoldian defenders of culture, to accept the distortions and special pleadings... involved in any attempt to make the past genuinely available to the present.

But of course Graham Hough knew this as well as I knew it. His own anti-Americanism had been so insistent that, unless indeed it was obsessive, it must have represented in his case too a deliberate abandoning of the Arnoldian role. We already had in England a politically conscious intellectual class in principled opposition to the national society, and ready on that principle to purvey "distortions and special pleadings" to the nation's student youth. Hough knew this. By pretending not to know it, pretending that it hadn't happened yet though it should have, he was wanting to swing over to his side people like myself who still believed that indoctrination is one thing, education another.

Not only does Britain have, in this deplorable sense, an intelligentsia; it has had one for a long time, at least thirty years. All through that time, to be a British intellectual and yet not a socialist has meant swimming against the tide. All that's comparatively new about the 1960s is the election of an allegedly socialist government. But even if the Wilson administration had chalked up a better record than it has, the British intelligentsia would still have deserted it. For an intelligentsia, being by Hough's definition a perpetual opposition, cannot be other than irresponsible. Like Antigone, it cannot afford ever to be answerable for the consequences of the actions it has demanded. And so any socialist government in Britain, however effective and honourable it might be, will always be disowned by the socialist intelligentsia of Great Britain, which will always move to the Left so as to resume its oppositionist role.

Thus, one asks for an intelligentsia in Hough's sense only if one assumes that intellectuals have a right to be politically irrespon-

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sible. As an intellectual myself I have never understood why any society should be expected to recognise that right, or be reproached for not conceding it. Czarist Russia, the society in which the concept of an intelligentsia was generated, never recognised nor conceded that right; nor did the Russian intelligentsia expect that it should.

THIS BRINGS ME TO Isaiah Berlin's argument that there isn't a British intelligentsia. When he says that Britain hasn't and cannot have an intelligentsia, what he means is that British intellectuals have not earned, and cannot claim, the right to that privileged irresponsibility which the Russian intelligentsia could justly claim, not from Czarist society but as it were before posterity. Graham Hough, perhaps chastened by this so as not to press the Russian analogy, held up instead the example of France, and urged British intellectuals "to accept their role, in fact, as Sartre has accepted it in his brilliant and polemical literary studies." That figures. When the militants of the University of Essex had pushed their *jusqu'auboutisme* to the point of denying a minority their right to hear an invited speaker speak on the subject of their choice, that eagle eye from its Paris eyrie saw clearly through the conflict of principles which enmeshed those of us on the spot; and Sartre sent a telegram of support to the militants. No doubt it is very insular of me to regard that as a quite scandalous symbol of the irresponsibility of an intelligentsia.

Anyhow, Britain surely has an intelligentsia, in the sense of a body of educated persons who demand and act upon the right to be politically irresponsible, Antigones whose "colossal nerve" becomes more impudent wherever Creon's nerve is first bent and then broken. I see in these people "the Lefty" as Amis defines him: "an intellectually disreputable and morally desensitised person."

HOW HAS IT COME ABOUT that British society not only tolerates such an intelligentsia (for that any democratic society has to do), but applauds it and is proud of it? No democratic society has yet found a way to restrict the influence that such people exert, and perhaps within a democracy no way can be found. But British society, so far from wishing to curtail the influence, encourages its intelligentsia and rewards it. In many areas of the national life it sometimes seems as if proven irresponsibility is the surest qualification for positions of responsibility and influence. It's foolish to start gobbling and hectoring about conspiracies and self-perpetuating cliques. The answer must be looked for somewhere else. I'd put it that the Antigones are so powerful in Britain because there are virtually no Creons left, and precious few Ismenes. Amis' Lefty gets his own way so often because he has us half-converted before he starts. Those who should play Creon's role, or Ismene's, and conceive themselves to be doing so, believe in their hearts that Antigone is right. Lefty turns out to have involuntary sleep-walking allies in the most unlikely places. The poet who wrote "Masters" was such an involuntary accomplice, so I have suggested; and the poet who wrote "Creon's Mouse" was another. Yet another is the author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. And he is a specially instructive case.

FOR ALL I KNOW, J. R. R. Tolkien may be a Labour voter. On the face of it, nothing seems much less likely. A Roman Catholic born in South Africa who has spent nearly all his professional life as fellow of an Oxford college, specialising in Old English—nothing could be much further from the Lefty stereotype, or from the type of the British intelligentsia as I have tried to define it. (For to be a scholar does not automatically put you in the intelligentsia, nor does being a poet, a sculptor or a painter put you there—but that's another argument.) Yet I read *The Lord of the Rings* as a parable of authority, a parable pointing in one direction —towards the conviction that authority in public matters, because it is always spiritually perilous to the person it is vested in, can be and ought to be resisted and refused by anyone who wants to live humanely. And this is the conviction that the Anti-University was based on; it is Antigone's conviction.

The Lord of the Rings is one of the most surprising products of British literature since 1945, and one of the most serious. Edmund Wilson's attack on the book,[1] though it heartenningly insisted on the obvious—for instance, that Tolkien's prose is as undistinguished as his verse (someone ought to point out, for example, how much mileage he gets out of the one word "great")—quite fails to account for the seriousness of the undertaking, for the pressure that drove the author through these thousand or more pages, as it has driven many readers (this reader among them) to follow through the same pages eagerly. The avidity with which *The Lord of the Rings* is read, the appeal of it and the loyalty it evokes among admirers—these are self-evident facts which can't be explained convincingly by talk of

[1] "Oo, those Awful Orcs!" (1956), reprinted in *The Bit Between my Teeth* (1965).

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frivolity and escapism. The fantasy which the narrative promotes and exploits and nourishes has to be something which answers to a specific need. And as to this, Edmund Wilson has nothing to say.

At first sight there seems an obvious solution: the book answers to a hunger for the heroic. And to some degree this must be true; *The Lord of the Rings* is a grown-up's *Superman*. But the driving force of the book is unheroic, even anti-heroic. The logic of the plot (which is very logical and tidy, not at all like medieval romance) is quite unequivocal; heroes are not to be trusted, only anti-heroes. The heroes have the style of authority. They are always looking "stern" or "grave." And so Tolkien's narrative seems to contain many portentous images of civic authority taken and exercised—for instance, by Gandalf the wizard, and Aragorn the lost King who comes into his own. But though these heroes have the style of authority, they never have the fact of power. Tolkien asks us to admire them precisely because, when they are offered power, Gandalf and Aragorn refuse it. The villains are those, like another wizard, Saruman, who when they see a chance of power to back their authority, attempt to take it. And the contrast between Gandalf and Saruman is particularly interesting, because in the world that Tolkien has made the wizards are intellectuals. They are superhuman, however; and so, really, is Aragorn. He is called a Man, but he is of superhuman mould, with an "elvish" admixture, and he lives much longer than normal men. Indeed the point of leverage for the whole of Tolkien's creation is an assumption the sourness of which is surprisingly little noticed, still less resented—the assumption that the hobbits, who are less than human, are the only beings in Tolkien's world that a human reader can, as we say, "identify with." We are forced to go along with this assumption because of the language that is put in the mouths of the hobbits, as contrasted with the more elevated and literary language that is spoken by everyone else. Though the language that the hobbits speak is not convincingly the language which the common Englishman does use (and sometimes, as in the case of the loyal servitor, Samwise, is quite embarrassingly wide of that mark), it is plainly meant to be so, and we register it as at least nearer to live spoken English than the archaic and rhetorical language given to all others.

WHAT THE NARRATIVE SAYS is that neither Gandalf nor Aragorn can be trusted with the power of the magical Ring—a power which on the contrary can be entrusted safely only to the hobbit, Frodo. The idealistic and devotedly heroic capacities of men cannot be trusted with power; power can safely be invested (and even so not with complete safety, for even Frodo is tempted and falls right at the end) only in those "halfling" men who, lost in a sleep of modestly sensual gratification, can rise to idealism only reluctantly and mistrustfully under the pressure of outrageous events, who behave heroically as it were in spite of themselves and to their own surprise, without premeditation. Thus the whole vast work tends to one end—to the elevation of the common man, of the private soldier over his officers and the schoolboy over his schoolmasters, of the sensual man over the intellectual, and of the spiritually lazy man over the spiritually exacting and ambitious. This is "the Dunkirk spirit," or "Theirs not to reason why":

> "Still we shall have to try," said Frodo. "It's no worse than I expected. I never hoped to get across. I can't see any hope of it now. But I've still got to do the best I can. . . ."

Although no hobbit can be imagined as fornicating, an American admirer of *The Lord of the Rings* got the message when he was moved to "memories of War, when unlettered, fornicating, foul-mouthed Tommies were heroes, pure and simple, on occasion. . . ."[2]

When a narrative calls up images so charged with sentiment as the fornicating Tommy and the Dunkirk beaches, anyone who carps at it has to be ready for trouble. So it's prudent to say that these images are charged for me too. A work of literature that calls them up, not explicitly but I think insistently, is Edwin Muir's poem, "The Combat," which in my opinion grasps more austerely than Tolkien everything in Tolkien's vision that can be made true and moving.

AMIS' "MASTERS" is nearer to *The Lord of the Rings* than to "The Combat." All the same there are differences between Amis' concerns in his poem, and Tolkien's in his romance; differences that are important and also troublesome. They have to do with the difference between authority and power. Amis' poem is entirely concerned with authority, and in fact with the *style* of authority—with whatever it is in some sorts of behaviour that makes such behaviour authoritative. Tolkien is concerned with this, but he's also concerned with power. Gandalf and Aragorn have authority without power; and this, it seems, is all right. Frodo the hobbit has power without authority; and this is all right too. What is not all right, in Tolkien's scheme

[2] William Ready, *The Tolkien Relation* (Chicago, 1968), p. 88.

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of things, is to be like Saruman the wicked wizard who wants power *and* authority, both at the same time, the one to back the other. Creon and even Ismene would find this hard to understand. And so do I. Power without authority is unauthorised power is the power of the gangster. Authority without power is impotent authority, the authority of the figurehead, the merely nominal head of state. But that is not the worst of it. If, as Amis does explicitly and Tolkien by implication, you identify authority with *style* ("They only are secure who seem secure"), then power without authority means power where we least expect it, power that is exerted upon us without manifesting itself: the power, for instance, of the advertiser and the media-manipulator—power which is all the more dangerous for not having any of the external marks by which we might recognise it, a power which operates under wraps or under the mask of the entertainer and the discreet or fawning servant. And authority without power, when authority is identified with style, becomes the magnetic or hypnotic authority of the great performer and the charismatic leader, the authority of a Hitler, whose authority *is* his power, and a very great power indeed. This authority is personal; it is conceded, and the power of it is exerted, in every classroom of any Anti-University.

"Your personal authority as a good teacher is unalienable; why do you need to have it registered in a title like Professor, and in privileges that go with that title?"

This is what campus rebels have said to me, speaking in the very accent of Antigone, and of J. R. R. Tolkien too. They do not understand me, or they do not believe me, if I reply: "Because power that is authorised, and is seen to be authorised, is the only sort of power that can be controlled and allowed for and if necessary guarded against—by the man who wields it, but also and more urgently by those he wields it over, who may suffer by it."

TOLKIEN, it is well known, is far more popular with American youth than with British; and among radicals and dissidents as much as with the squares. The manager of the Berkeley campus bookstore told the *New York Times* (15 January 1967), "This is more than a campus craze. It's like a drug dream." A vision so British as *The Lord of the Rings* cannot help but be distorted in the enthusiastic imagination of an American sophomore; and so one is sympathetic as well as amused, reading of Tolkien's distaste for things like the campaign buttons reading, "SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL HOBBIT," or "GO, GO, GANDALF." All the same, an editor for the American publishers of Tolkien in paperback was obviously in the right when he told the *New York Times*, "Young people today are interested in power and they are interested in working out the conflict of good and evil. Here it is worked out for them." It is indeed; perhaps perversely, but certainly with impressive consistency. Antigone is right to be grateful. And although American campus rebels are very different from the British rebels, it's reasonable to think that when they cry *"Pigs!"* at the representatives of authority on and off campus they, like their British counterparts, are conceiving of a society from which authority shall seem to have vanished, where at any given moment overt authority shall be vested in no one at all. *The Lord of the Rings* endorses such hopes, and feeds them.

William Ready, who wrote *The Tolkien Relation*, speaks for a quite different section of Tolkien's American public. He is irritated and embarrassed by "the children and those who cherish simplicity, the wooden-beads-and-sandals set, in whom he has aroused enthusiasm. . . ." And he admits, in some bewilderment, "This is a surprising cult, this campus trend, because Tolkien is all conservative, traditional and rigid. . . ." But, of course, no British reader need be bewildered. The Dunkirk spirit brings a lump to a Tory throat as soon as a cheer from a Labour conference; Antigone is as ready to sprinkle regretful dust on the graves of our war dead, as Creon is to deliver an oration over them. And British society, in entrusting itself ever since 1939 to the principle of "a lot of weak government," has come perhaps as near as any society can to making itself into a society from which overt authority shall be absent; that is to say, just the sort of society which *The Lord of the Rings* incites us to realise.

For in practice a social organisation based on the conviction that no man can be trusted with authority has to take the form of government by committee; and thus *The Lord of the Rings* can figure as an elaborate apology for the rule by bureaucracy which Britain has invited and endured for the last 30 years, under coalition and Conservative governments as well as under Labour. The committees have the authority. As for the power, that is with the advertisers and the commentators and the trend-setters, with the Touch-Paceys in N.W.1, and with those members of committees—ministers, professors of economics, vice-chancellors, trade union leaders, others—who hurry from the committee-rooms to the T.V. studios.

They are all Antigones really. Creon's is such a thankless role in modern Britain that there is no one left to play it with conviction.

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PRESS

Demi-Monde

By Richard Mayne

"TEENAGE COUPLE IN CLIMBING DRAMA A student mountaineer was admitted to Dame Dob Hospital tonight with a fractured skull following a fall in which his unmarried girl companion escaped unhurt."

This is how the British or American press might conceivably report the case of Jack and Jill. A French newspaper would do it differently:

> LES PÉRILS DE L'ALPINISME D'AMATEUR: *Une quête d'eau qui tourna mal. La chronique des faits divers rapporte chaque été le triste bilan de l'imprudence des jeunes qui s'aventurent sur mer ou à la montagne sans avoir pris les précautions minimes qu'exige la pratique en sûreté de n'importe quel sport....*

It's another world—more leisurely, more literary, less sensational, more moralistic. Can it be transposed to our own?

For some months now, *Le Monde* has been trying the experiment. Alongside its daily editions and the monthly *Monde Diplomatique* and *Monde des Philatélistes*, the paper has long published a weekly *Sélection* in French, chiefly for overseas readers; and since 23 April 1969, it's begun to put out a similar but not identical *Selection* in English. It appears every Wednesday at two shillings or fifty U.S. cents an issue; the subscription rate in Britain is £5 a year, or $17.50 by airmail to the United States. (The daily French edition, for comparison, costs 1s. 3d. in Britain and fifty cents in the United States; a year's subscription by surface mail costs about £15 or $36.) *Mutatis mutandis*, is the new venture worth while?

In format, *Le Monde*'s *Weekly Selection* resembles its parent—what its director Hubert Beuve-Méry once called "a small dull newspaper." On a page *18" × 12"* it carries six closely printed columns, with no pictures except in the advertisements and in occasional literary articles. It shares with the American and the rest of the French press the habit of continuing front-page stories somewhere inside the paper; and its generally grey appearance is emphasised, in the English edition, by the pale grey oblong behind its title-piece. At present, it has eight pages, including one on economic affairs, one on literature, and one on arts and entertainments; one-third of the back page is usually devoted to a colour report in "Letter from..." style. The rest of the paper covers the week's news, with a leaning towards foreign affairs; there's usually a full-page report on some topical location, and a box of two half-columns summarising the news in France.

Beuve-Méry had contemplated publishing an English edition for several years; and he made practical preparations well in advance, appointing a small British and American editorial staff, which in turn recruited some forty or so part-time translators.[1] An initial dummy number appeared at the beginning of May 1968, carrying front-page news of student demonstrations; it was followed by at least four others before the new publication was officially launched. Even so, the first few numbers were an anthology of eccentricities:

> ... it is not true, however, that "the nation's destiny" rides in the balance ... one of the régime's better-known personalities ... the crisis of last May gave evidence of ... neither is it known whether these movements will designate a common candidate....

Although few were ungrammatical, most smacked of *franglais*. Odder still were some of the headlines:

> ... MR. JENKINS KEEPS THE VOTERS IN MIND ... TORNADO WELDS NATIONAL UNITY ... BELGIUM IN THE THROES OF REGIONALIST FEVER ... SWEDEN MAY NOT REACH ITS ECONOMIC GOALS THIS YEAR ... DR. ZINSOU ADMINISTERS TO CHRONICALLY SICK DAHOMEY ... THE NAGGING EVIL OF BANDITRY ... ITCH FOR RENEWAL AND THE VOID....

Headlinese, of course, is odd in any language. What makes the English *Monde*'s specimens so striking is that they work on the opposite principle to that of the British and American press. Here, brevity is all: Ministers don't resign, but "QUIT"; judges don't censure, but "RAP"; no couple is ever married when they can be "WED"; costs are not reduced, but "CUT"—or, more often, "SOAR" instead of increasing. And so on and so forth—or, rather, &c. *Le Monde*'s headlines, in the French style, are more like grammatical sentences; and since the English version uses the French paper's layout, the headline writer's problem often seems to be

[1] Myself sometimes included—which makes this an exercise in *mea culpa* as well as in *lèse-majesté*.

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that of expanding his message to fill out his space. One fairly recent example—"EUROPE NEEDS A FRESH DOSE OF CONFIDENCE"—was flanked by another even better: "FRENCH BANK RATE RAISED TO PREVENT SUDDEN OUTFLOW BEFORE NEW RÉGIME CAN ACT." With headlines like that, who wants a story?

French journalists don't ask that question; but they certainly query the British and American practice of following an informative headline with a "lead" that also encapsulates the news. Why repeat oneself?—especially since repetition is frowned on in traditional French prose. It's easy to sympathise—provided one sees newspaper writing as a branch of literature; but readers of the English *Monde*, unused to French journalistic habits, may be puzzled by opening sentences that look like Example *A* (How NOT To Do It) from the WizBang Correspondence course in World Journalism, Lesson One, "The importance of the lead—hit 'em hard before they hit *you*!"

> The dispute between the U.S. and the Peruvian governments is the central preoccupation in every Latin-American chancellery, and illustrates the deterioration that has taken place in relations between the two halves of the hemisphere.

WizBang version (Example *B*):

> Tiny Peru caused a striped-pants sensation here today when she got tough with Uncle Sam.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE, perhaps, to re-write *Le Monde* in accordance with British and American custom, using WizBang's Example *C* (The Quality Press):

> The Colonel stroked his Don Ameche moustache and looked with liquid brown eyes across the *plaza* to where the Stars and Stripes of the U.S. Embassy fluttered in the thin Peruvian sunshine. "*Si, Señor,* we are worried," he told me. "But we are Latins first, Americans second."

To be fair, some of the English *Monde*'s colour pieces read rather like that. But it's the universal voice of the journalist-as-novelist-*manqué*, and no rewriting is involved. Nor, I think, would a rewritten *Monde* preserve the paper's virtues. Its French staff writers watch the English translation "like hawks," in the words of its editor; they're rightly anxious to lose no *nuance*, to make no concession to what they'd regard as a jazzed-up, distorted presentation of their views.

I say "views" deliberately, since even the news stories in the parent paper are often partly think-pieces. More sophisticated—as well as more opinionated—than some of their foreign colleagues, *Le Monde* staffers make no crude distinction between "fact" and "comment," realising that selection inevitably turns the former into the latter, and that in the attentive world of French politics, comment itself is also fact. In less responsible hands, the blurring of one into the other could lead to abuses. Sometimes it does, even in *Le Monde*: foreign correspondents, in particular, now and then present misleading pictures of, say, British coolness on the Common Market or American attitudes to Viet Nam. But for the most part *Le Monde*'s stories are written with great care, even tact; and although in English they may seem laboured or academic, there's a case for treating some complex items in just this cautious way.

Here is one example. In the third issue of the *Weekly Selection*, Jacques Isnard reported that the French Chief of Staff, General Fourquet, seemed to be questioning the established Gaullist doctrine of "defence against all points of the compass," as well as advocating something like the MacNamara (and NATO) strategy of "flexible response." By British or American newspaper canons, Isnard's lead was highly uninformative:

> The Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces, General Michel Fourquet, has just published a major article in the *Revue de la Défense Nationale.*

He went on:

> Despite its deliberately austere and technical style, this article is bound to have wide repercussions, for it heralds a new orientation in French defence policy.

4½ column inches later, Isnard came to the "news"; and even then he expressed it with caution:

> . . . General Fourquet speaks of the "flexible response" which might precede a "strategic strike" (otherwise called "total deterrent") against an aggressor. He speaks of "the enemy from the East" against whom French divisions would be engaged "in close cooperation" with their allies. It is clear that General Fourquet's ideas form the basis of a national defence policy which differs considerably from that in effect since 1959.

The remainder of the piece was a reasoned exposé both of the article it reported and of the military background. It was clear, logical, and subtle, lending just the right weight, and no more, to Fourquet's measured and uncombative rethinking of policy. To have presented the "news" more dramatically as a repudiation of previous orthodoxy would have distorted its nature; it might also have provoked the ortho-

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dox reaction that Fourquet himself had sought to prevent. This seems to me an instance of responsible journalism, written for those who are willing to reflect, not merely react.

AT A TIME when television and radio are more and more assuming the role of newspapers, providing nuggets of "fact" as fast as the wire services can collect them, responsible interpretation such as *Le Monde* at its best supplies is becoming more and more necessary. "Insight" and its rivals perform a vital service. Only *Le Monde*, however, does this on a daily basis. Of course, it has its faults. Some of them are glaring, and they show up more sharply in the English version. It uses dead metaphors: "set the ship of state back on course"—"throw his hat into the ring"—"she rules her waitresses with a rod of iron." It relies too much on allusion: "General de Gaulle is not Caesar," wrote Beuve-Méry in the first English number. "It is a pity—for his sake and ours—that he is not Cincinnatus either." It can be duller than need be: "GERMANY REMAINS FOCAL POINT" and "OKINAWA—KEYSTONE OF THE PACIFIC"—two recent headlines—only recall Peter Sellers' travelogue, "Bal-ham, Gateway to the South." And of course it's Gallocentric; but *The Times*, whether of London or New York, can hardly claim to be less focussed on the domestic scene, while *Le Monde*'s foreign coverage—especially of Africa and Asia—has a depth that remains unique.

To read *Le Monde* daily is an enlightening exercise. To read it weekly, in English, gives a strange sense of dislocation at the point where two conceptions of journalism meet and often clash. But the strangeness is lessened if one thinks of it, not as a *demi-Monde*, a daily paper in little, but as a weekly magazine of news. At present, it's still too modest: maybe a different format, with more space, would make it seem less strange. As it is, one compares it with the parent daily, and it inevitably appears thin. But until there's a daily English equivalent, it remains a bargain; and looking back over my own collection, I'm surprised to find how much of it I still want to keep in the archives—however it handles Jacques and Gilles.

RICHARD MAYNE *writes regularly from Paris for* ENCOUNTER. *Among his recent contributions are "Après Moi le Dauphin?" (June 1969), "Maigret and the Happening" (September 1968), and "Why French Students Rebel" (July 1968).*

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LETTERS

Conquest on the Moon

ROBERT CONQUEST sees in *2001* nothing but technological wonders for pseudo-intellectuals fixated at the *Boy's Own Paper* level [ENCOUNTER, June] A curious tendency in ENCOUNTER is the reluctance of its men of letters to concede coherent meaning to movies (*vide* Nicola Chiaromonte in January 1963, expertly rebutted by Francis Wyndham, and J. G. Weightman on everyone from Bergman to Levy and now Pasolini).

2001 is a cry of despair. Man's ape ancester had the hands and the strength but was too nerveless and therefore uninventive to survive. The black tablet (ambivalently suggesting Moses, Stonehenge, Calvinism, a headstone) endows him with intelligence, *i.e.* the idea of bone as tool for killing. As the enlightened ape ecstatically threshes skull with bone, we cut to a space craft which is, visually, a bone (and is structured like skull and spine throughout the film).

All the wonders of science (videophone to moon) are used to communicate empty feelings (the child's birthday message is as selfish as her father is nervelessly docile). In their desert, the apes starved; in their technological desert, these men sit and suck snacks. An astronaut runs in the exercise drum, making boxing gestures (recap the shuffling apes).

As man has cowed himself into an inefficient machine, the computer (HAL) is as human as they. His quiet, reasonable, coaxing, demasculinised voice is their ego-ideal. Calculating that he can fulfil the mission better than they, he decides to destroy them. But just as one of the apes had just enough courage to touch the tablet, so one of the men has just enough animal health left to remove the (tablet-shaped) cells of HAL's brain. HAL reacts like a man (fear, "I feel better now," madness). And HAL was ineligible for the next evolutionary stage prepared by the race of the tablets, provided man could think his way to Jupiter.

> "Everything leads us to believe that there exists a certain point of the intelligence at which life and death, the real and the imaginary, the past and the future . . . cease to be perceived as opposites." (Breton)

"In" Jupiter the astronaut sees himself eat a last civilised meal (at the table), die (in the bed), and be transformed into an embryo as different from man as man from his ape-like ancestor.

Some sub-themes:

1. *Eyes.* The dull, sad apes' eyes; the too-bright glint in the leopard who terrorises them; HAL's red eye; the embryo's huge, disturbingly alert eyes.

2. *Civilisations.* The Blue Danube Waltz for the rotating spacecraft, as if the formal *joie-de-vivre* of the Austrian Empire were immolated in the machines (*we* don't dance, we watch free-fall on TV). The wine-glass spilled by the old aristocrat in the colonial Louis XVI room prepared for the astronaut (and evoking both French and American revolutions; the exhaustion of old orders).

3. *Evolution* (progress) isn't intrinsic to man, nor to nature; man's greatest indignity is his dependence on outside intervention. He comes from a stock deficient in life-force; the astronauts die in sarcophagi, their death is shown as wave-patterns on graphs. There is no reason to suppose that the Star Babe will be more moral than man.

4. Much of the film's effect lies in its elaborate, slow physical empathy, conjoined with the architectural structuring of its visuals (planetary conjunctions, spacecraft shapes, wave-forms). It is a painterly-sculptural film.

Far from being vague and indefinite, its reflections on man's intelligence and life-force recall (but differ from) Thomas Hardy.

Why is the meaning not made so clear that even Robert Conquest can understand it? Three reasons: *1.* Why isn't *The Waste Land* obvious? *2.* Obviousness shortcircuits experience. *3.* Filmgoers like riddles (cf. *Marienbad*, Robbe-Grillet, etc.).

That the film is meaningful to its generation may be confirmed by reference to Tom Nairn in *Oz* 13 and Clive James in *Cinema* 2, while Christopher Cornford's dithyramb in a recent *R.C.A. Newsletter* testifies to its visual sophistication and power.

RAYMOND DURGNAT

St. Martin's School of Art
London

MR. DURGNAT's delightful parody of the sort of thing I was objecting to leaves little for me to add. But perhaps the hasty reader may miss some of his subtler touches, and I should like to draw attention to a few of these:

1. The use of a pretentious, but inadequately mastered, vocabulary to indicate the level of intellectual maturity which goes for this type of theorising. "Immolated" and "ambivalent" are particularly well-handled.

2. The choice, among the many equally specious possibilities obtainable by an arbitrary cypher, of an interpretation quite incompatible with our only evidence, the book of the film written by the co-author of the screenplay.

3. The pointing up of the silliness of the claim to a higher comprehension by the cunning misunderstanding of comparatively simple particular events. "'In' Jupiter" is an especially thorough confusion, with no warrant in any sense whatever; and the "colonial Louis XVI room" (a style which, owing to the briefness of its duration—1774–6, has left few other traces) is identified in the book as no more than an "elegant, anonymous hotel suite." Its supposed inhabitant, the "old aristocrat," is a wonderful invention too.

Mr. Durgnat's point that literary men like John Weightman, Nicola Chiaromonte and myself seldom fall for this silly-clever obfuscation is well taken, and much appreciated. Perhaps it is because we are more directly concerned with the whole question of meaning and communication, over all that rich territory between the obvious and the inane. But I suspect that, since similar stuff (if on a more sophisticated level) has appeared on the lunatic fringes of literary criticism for at least two generations, we are simply better trained in detecting it.

ROBERT CONQUEST

London

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The German Opposition to Hitler

A Reply to Critics — By DAVID ASTOR

SIR JOHN WHEELER-BENNETT is mistaken if he believes that he never thought the German opposition might take successful action against Hitler, once war had broken out. His official memorandum (dated 28 December 1939) speaks of "an ally within Germany itself ... more numerous and powerful than may be supposed ... [with] a common aim with the Democratic Powers in destroying the Nazi régime." He is also mistaken in suggesting that he always believed outside help unnecessary or undesirable. In the same document he says "these elements within Germany should be strengthened and encouraged" and speaks of the "essential preliminary assurance" that they needed from the Allies.

Sir John now says he doubts whether he was ever in a position significantly to influence British policy. Why, then, did he write his memorandum? He also asks what "convincing" firm evidence there is that the German opposition could have overthrown Hitler in war-time, even if granted Anglo-American support and encouragement. As he well knows, there could in the nature of things be no such evidence.

Another way of answering these two questions would be to say that the members of the German opposition would never have made any attempt to overthrow Hitler had they first asked themselves whether their own positions were sufficiently influential or had they required the guarantees of success that Sir John now implies he and the British Government were entitled to demand before taking the lesser risk of supporting them verbally and morally from the safety of London.

For the German opposition, the risks of their enterprise included the most protracted and painful deaths that could be devised. During those terrible hours, they may have asked themselves why nobody abroad had been willing to help them. As his chief reason, Sir John gives the view that it was essential that "Germany be defeated in the field and compelled to surrender unconditionally."

It can never be proved whether this official British belief greatly lengthened the war. The members of the German opposition thought it did and the survivors of their plot still think so. What is certain is that the numbers of innocent people of many nationalities killed in that final year of the war—in concentration camps, city centres, on battlefields—must be counted in millions. Can we today regard the doctrine of "Unconditional Surrender" as having justified the refusal to give any support to the attempt by the German opposition to overthrow Hitler, which might have prevented suffering so much?

MR. CHRISTOPHER SYKES, in dismissing my suggestion that he did not properly examine the British side of this story says: "No British official documents directly concerning the case of Trott have yet been published." In saying this he is, of course, overlooking John Wheeler-Bennett's memorandum from which I have already quoted. It is a document which Trott helped to compose and which represents one high-point of cooperation between a British official and a spokesman of the German opposition. Mr. Sykes was furnished with it. But, like Sir John, he evidently did not want to consider even the small degree of British responsibility typified by Sir John's failure to stand by a brave memorandum which he has since tried to forget. The same is true of the other British historians who have so far failed to notice this document and its implications.

SOME OF THE OTHER CORRESPONDENTS TO ENCOUNTER write as if they feel themselves in a position to criticise this or that member of the German opposition. Do they see themselves as greater potential heroes and more successful intriguers? I can only say that I would not myself have had the courage to join that opposition if, like Trott, I had had the chance to emigrate. Indeed, I urged him *not* to return to Germany. On the other hand, I am equally sure that, before war broke out, it did not take enormous intelligence or imagination to recognise him and the others like him as determined and trustworthy allies. Sir John Wheeler-Bennett and I were not alone in doing so. But there were few of us, and we did little.

If the Nazis were responsible for all that *they* did and their German opponents for all that *they* did and did not do, are not British people equally responsible for their acts and omissions? It is perfectly true that the public atmosphere in Britain in those times was not conducive to clear thinking. But the atmosphere in Nazi Germany was a great deal less so—which is why Sir John's condescending book about how the Germans failed to rid themselves unaided of Hitler (*Nemesis of Power*, 1953) is so embarrassing, particularly coming as it does from someone who has failed even to give a full account of his own part in the story.

The plainest example of the narrowness and inadequacy of this country's war-time attitude was our government's flat refusal in the summer of 1944 to promise even a temporary cessation of the bombing of Berlin (which could have had no military significance) when the German opposition asked for this minimal sign of approval to follow, if they managed to kill Hitler and break his government. There has been almost no British criticism of this attitude in the twenty-five years that have since passed.

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